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THE OFFICE SECRETARY

A STUDY OF AN OCCUPATIONAL GROUP OF  
WOMEN OFFICE WORKERS

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VOL 2

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

THE CITY UNIVERSITY,  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES,  
APRIL, 1974.

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## CHAPTER XI

### THE USE OF OFFICE MACHINERY

C. Wright Mills likened the work of the modern office to that of the factory. 'The new office is rationalized; machines are used, employees become machine attendants; the work, as in the factory, is collective, not individualized; it is standardized for interchangeable, quickly replaceable clerks; it is specialized to the point of automatization'.<sup>1</sup> Not only clerks had become increasingly mechanised, 'Dictation was once a private meeting of executive and secretary. Now the executive phones a pool of dictaphone transcribers whom he never sees and who know him merely as a voice.'<sup>2</sup> Mills stated that as more office machinery was introduced, so the numbers of routine jobs were increased, and the positions requiring initiative were decreased.<sup>3</sup> He maintained that the tendency would be for the numbers of secretaries to be reduced by limiting their employment to senior executives only, while 'The junior executive has his stenographer on his desk in a metal box.'<sup>4</sup> He foretold that the skill of shorthand would become obsolete, that the white collar girl would become immediately replaceable and that work in offices would become increasingly a blind alley.

<sup>5</sup> Lockwood, however, pointed out that mechanisation did not necessarily mean that office work became like factory work, for in a factory situation, 'human labour becomes ancillary to the machine instead of the machine being ancillary to human labour.' He said that apart from the computer which is intended to replace certain routine clerical functions, most office machinery was employed in such a way that it reinforced



## CHAPTER XI

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and supported existing clerical functions.

It has already been shown in this study (Chapter VIII) that almost as many secretaries are employed by middle management as by senior and executive management, disproving Wright Mills' prognostication that secretaries would be confined to senior executives while machines would replace secretaries working for less senior management. The increasing demand also runs counter to his views, for the present at least; in 1972, for every job applicant with shorthand-typing skills there were two or three job vacancies, while there were only one or two for every typist<sup>6</sup> or machine operator applicant.

That semi-automated typing centres are not replacing secretaries is also supported by the fact that half of the secretaries in the present study worked in situations where audio-typists were employed in addition to secretaries (Appendix 1, question no.44). The people who work in audio-typing centres are not those who would formerly have become secretaries, but those who were formerly clerks doing routine work, according to the experience of one large organisation which installed a central dictating system; they were usually older married women who had returned to work having brought up families and they were not seeking demanding jobs. Top executives in large organisations often have a secretary as well as the use of a centralised dictating system, an indication that machinery may have a favourable effect on a secretary's job by reducing routine tasks while leaving the more responsible ones. Some machine work, for instance photocopying

may be delegated to more junior staff, again enhancing rather than limiting the secretary's work. Consequently the effects that mechanisation has had, or will have, on the secretary's job, are likely to be less detrimental than the effects upon other types of clerical worker. In addition, half of all secretaries in the London sample worked for small organisations where centralised dictating systems are irrelevant.

Secretaries have not, in the main, been concerned with the type of task which is easily amenable to mechanisation (with the exception of dictation machines) although changes which are now under way may well affect the work of some of them.

Machines are used for all types of office function, including copying and reproducing papers, the storage and retrieval of information, the transmission of information, and calculating; the most dramatic changes having been brought about by the computer. Routine procedures, previously undertaken by clerks, have been transferred to machines, although generally the savings in human labour have been minimal.<sup>7</sup>

Developments which perhaps will concern secretaries most are those associated with the typewriter, which has been significantly improved over the years. One of the most important changes has been its electrification, producing type which is more even and hence more pleasing in appearance than that of non-electrical machines, and enabling typing to be done more quickly. Other examples of change are the 'golf ball' electric typewriter, so-called because instead of characters being held on the end of bars of metal they are arranged around the surface of an interchangeable sphere, enabling whole sets of symbols or the type face to be changed, while using the same machine.

The 'Varityper' is able to justify margins at both sides of a typed page, thus producing the same effect as a printed book. More recently, the use of magnetic tapes and cards has resulted in a typewriter which produces standard letters automatically and enables alterations to be made or errors to be corrected without the necessity of the typist retyping a whole page. Any number of perfect copies can then be produced, which saves a considerable amount of time where letter writing or typed paper work takes up a large part of an office worker's day. The movement has begun where the typewriter will be linked to a computer and hence will become a terminal unit 'able to summon data to a display screen, copy selected details into a letter which has already been preset on punched tape, and, finally, calculate the results of the undoubtedly successful contract, punching them on tape for transmission to the computer memory banks at the appropriate date.' <sup>8</sup> The long-anticipated automatic typewriter, which will type on to paper from a dictator's voice, is being developed and may well be in use by the 1980s.

Other features of general office work which are being increasingly automated include telephone and filing systems. As far as the former is concerned, push-button telephones and automatic dialling will become common and special linkages will be increasingly available so that, for instance, a group of people rather than two only will be able to hold a telephone conversation, or messages will be sent out by telephone to several extensions simultaneously. Visual links may be attached so that persons talking to each



other can also be seen.

For filing, the use of microfilm as a space-saving device is being used although its application is still limited. Papers are photographed then stored, but have to be read through a special piece of equipment, a reader-printer, which may also make a copy of the paper required. At a more mundane level, actual letters and documents can be stored in improved filing systems, some of which are powered, so that the file comes to the searcher, rather than the other way round.

Ways of dealing with the post are also changing, with the use of automatic letter openers, decollators and addressers, as well as document conveyors to move papers around.

The use of machinery for copying or duplicating documents may lead to a reduction in old devices such as carbon paper and stencils. One employer maintained that the Telex reduced the need for a considerable amount of correspondence, since the messages served the same function as letters.

Many technological advances are likely to be used only in large organisations and will consequently leave relatively unaffected the working life of that half of the total number of secretaries who are employed in smaller organisations. Although mergers continue to create larger units, nevertheless small organisations are perpetually born and will need secretaries who are able to deal with a variety of jobs without expensive mechanical aids, although secretaries will have to possess a knowledge of such things as data-processing and the utilisation of computers. It is more likely that smaller individual machines will play a

greater part in the everyday work of a secretary, for instance small calculating machines have become much cheaper and more convenient and are likely to become standard equipment in most offices; so may photocopying machines, and pocket dictating machines may be employed instead of notebooks.

In order to discover what impact office machinery had already made on the secretary's job, respondents were asked questions about the machines they used at work; whether they felt technology to be a threat; if, in their view, machines would bring about any changes in their work situation; and whether they were prepared to use audio equipment (Appendix 1, questions nos. 46 - 50).

70 per cent of all London secretaries used some piece of office machinery other than a typewriter and a telephone, and most used more than one. The types of machinery they used are shown in Table XI.1

It can be seen that photocopying has overtaken other forms of duplicating and undoubtedly its use will continue to grow, since it can save considerable time and effort. Although half the London secretaries used a photocopying machine, it does not mean that half the establishments taking part in the survey had them, since, where more than one secretary was employed in an establishment, there might have been only one machine for the use of several secretaries. Nevertheless, it has obviously become a well-established piece of equipment.

The use of machinery can affect the status of a secretary's job. Some machines, such as telephones, have no status connotation in the office because their use is universal. The typewriter

Table XI.1

The types of machinery used by secretaries  
(excluding typewriter and telephone)

	LONDON (n=515) %	IQPS (n=170) %	NAPS (n=73) %
<u>Copying and duplication</u>			
Photocopying	50	57	37
Duplicating	23	13	29
<u>Dictating</u> (including tape recorder)	21	26	21
<u>Calculating</u> (including adding, conversion, comptometer, payroll)	17	18	23
<u>Communications</u>			
Switchboard, telephone services	7	1	3
Telex, teleprinter	7	5	3
<u>General aids</u>			
Listing (including addressing)	3	2	3
Paper work (binding, collating, folding, cutting, shredding, stapling)	4	4	7
Post (including franking)	2	1	-
Specialist (for particular field of work only)	1	1	-
Other	1	1	1

on the other hand does convey a status because, in England at least, it has been used predominately by women in relatively low-status jobs. It has been reported that many women executives who can type, deny any knowledge of their ability because of the lowered status they believe they will consequently have in the eyes of others, and even men are affected by this situation. Walker described how, when he used a typewriter in the Civil Service, he was regarded with 'embarrassed amusement' by his colleagues.



Dictating machines in particular may have a considerable affect upon a secretary's status, and their use arouses ambivalence, even hostility. Acceptance of dictating machines in offices has been stimulated by the shortage of staff who know shorthand, with the consequence that other means of dictating have had to be utilised. Their adoption may mean the loss of the personal relationship between a secretary and her boss, by decreasing the contact between them. Since her status is related to that of the person for whom the secretary works, anything which interferes with this relationship may result in a feeling of status deprivation. Furthermore, dictating machines are often associated with work in a typing pool; this has low status since it involves fairly close supervision and mechanical, rather than intellectual, skills. Consequently, using a dictating machine may result in a secretary feeling she is regarded as less important or intelligent than if she used shorthand.

Secretaries were asked whether they were prepared to use audio-machines in their work, and the response is shown in Table XI.2.

Table XI.2      Are you prepared to use audio-machines in your work?

	LONDON (n=515)	IQPS (n=170)	NAPS (n=73)
	%	%	%
Yes	48	48	37
Yes, under certain conditions	17	39	37
No	35	13	26

Including the conditional replies, 65 per cent of London secretaries would be willing to use dictating machines, compared with 87 per cent of IQPS and 74 per cent of NAPS. These results



show a very general willingness to use them (21 per cent in London did so already) which is surprising in view of the generally-held belief that secretaries are not willing to do so. The reasons may include training in the use of dictating machines forming part of the curricula of secretarial colleges and training institutions, pressure from employers, or favourable experience.

Dictating machines have the dual advantage of saving time and of being more flexible. A secretary's time is not wasted while waiting for dictation if, for example, a telephone call interrupts, and it also means that two people are not occupied simultaneously at the same task. If the boss dictates when it is convenient for him or her to do so, the secretary can be using the time to do something else. Again, work flow may be made smoother since a secretary may not have to wait for dictation before dealing with correspondence and other matters. A dictating machine is not restricted to an office setting or office hours but may be used in, for instance, a car, an aircraft or at home.

Some employers who find dictating to a secretary something of an ordeal, may also be helped by using a machine. 'If you run dry on ideas, or cannot think how to put into words what you want to say, the dictating machine does not think "silly old twit", and start deciding what it is going to wear for its date after work. You can think in privacy and all that the typist hears is decisive, uninterrupted dictation of a confident, articulate manager.'

Secretaries who gave conditional replies about their willingness to use dictating machines were emphatic that they would use them only if it did not exclude the use of shorthand. Many stated that they were happy to use the equipment if, for example, the boss was abroad and sent in tapes, or if there was considerable pressure of work.

The reasons given by London secretaries who said they were not willing to use dictating machines (34 per cent of the sample) fell into three main groups; those associated with the use of shorthand; problems of usage; and feelings and attitudes about or towards audio equipment (Table XI.3).

The range of problems expressed was wide, but the main categories into which most criticisms fell were:

- a) audio machines are impersonal
- b) there was a preference for using shorthand or for retaining a skill
- c) audio machines are boring

This confirms the main reason why secretaries do not like using dictating machines is that they are impersonal, that is, they interfere with the relationship between the boss and secretary. The use of audio equipment means that a boss can dictate where and when he or she wishes and can leave the tape, or the machine, on the secretary's desk without seeing her. She can type out the correspondence or follow instructions and leave them on the boss's desk. No personal contact need be made at all. Secretaries also felt that their job was made less interesting through the use of audio equipment.

Table XI.3

Reasons given by London secretaries for  
not wishing to use dictating machinesPercentage of London  
secretaries not willing  
to use dictating  
machines (n=173)

## A. REASONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE USE OF SHORTHAND

Wish to keep up shorthand, retain speed or skill	14
Enjoy or prefer shorthand	9

## B. PROBLEMS OF USAGE

1. Equipment

Bad reproduction, difficult to hear	5
Cumbersome	1

2. Situational

Too many interruptions	4
Too many people in office	1
Distracts others	1

3. Difficulties of usage

Difficult to alter or correct	3
Slower	2
Hard to judge size of letter, layout, content	2
Inaccurate, more errors made	1
Difficult	1
More difficult to understand subject matter	1
Wastes time	1
Replays are necessary	1

4. Detrimental effects

Causes headache or earache, pain	9
Uncomfortable, strain, nerve-racking	2
Tiring, irritating, irksome	4

5. Dictation

Poor dictation or diction	3
Dictator cannot give instructions	2

6. Training

Boss or secretary not trained to use machine	5
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7. Other problems of usage

Bad hearing	1
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## C. FEELINGS, ATTITUDES AND EFFECTS

Impersonal	26
Dislike using dictaphone generally	15
Boring, monotonous	13
Feel like a machine oneself, dehumanising	3
Undignified, lowers status, degrading	2
Not appropriate for secretaries	2
Feel cut off from other people	2
Reduces work interest	1
Ends boss/secretary relationship	1
Frustrating	1
Ends initiative	1
Unhygienic	1
Cannot participate or make suggestions	1

## D. OTHER REASONS GIVEN

Have typing pool or others to do the work	2
Union ruling	2
Little typing needed in job	1

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147\*

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\*totals more than 100 per cent because secretaries  
often gave more than one reason



Nevertheless, a considerable proportion of the disadvantages are<sup>11</sup> seen to concern problems of usage (47 per cent). Caroline Warne found, in her examination of twenty-six typewriting establishments in a government department, that problems of usage consisted mainly of technical considerations, such as hand and foot controls and the height of desk and chair relative to the machine. Noise from background sources, such as traffic, mechanical faults, and the dictator's voice pitch and volume were also sources of irritation. However, she found that those with slight deafness were helped by audio equipment, so the secretary in this sample who disliked it because she had bad hearing, might in fact be helped by using it. Training was found to be a most important consideration when introducing dictating machines, both for the dictator and the typist. In this study, unpleasant physical effects were the greatest cause of complaint in terms of usage, although invidious comparisons between the use of machines and shorthand accounted for the second greatest number of criticisms.

Reluctance to use dictating machines was greater among older secretaries, especially those over fifty, than among younger secretaries, although their resistance was on similar grounds, namely that the use of a dictating machine was impersonal or they wished to retain their shorthand skills.

The possibility was examined that secretaries who were most busy, measured by whether they ever had any time to spare at work, would be more willing to use audio equipment than other secretaries, but no statistical relationship was found to exist.

The preference for shorthand is probably related also to the training time which it requires; if machines were used instead of shorthand, that investment in training time would appear to have been wasted. Also, being able to utilise a scarce skill has a satisfaction of its own. Shorthand is one skill which sets a secretary apart from other clerical workers (excepting shorthand-typists) and relinquishing this distinguishing feature may be interpreted as a threat to her élite position.

Some other very real advantages are to be gained from the practice of shorthand dictation. Secretaries maintain that they can make suggestions, or give advice, at this time, and they can also learn what is going on in the firm generally, by listening to telephone calls which are taken while they are in the room or to conversations which occur when they are present. Bosses are also inclined to talk to their secretaries during a dictation session, so secretaries feel they would learn considerably less about the boss's work generally if these opportunities were missed. Again, personal contact gives an individual a sense of identity and value - to be thanked personally is of more significance face to face, than through a machine. In addition, a considerable amount of informal information can be communicated through personal contact, about such things as mood, pressure of work, or political situations in the office.

It is not possible to estimate with any accuracy, the pace or type of change which will be brought about in the future as a result of the use of office machinery, since unknown factors such as new inventions and economic pressures would play a part. Respondents



were asked, however, whether they could foresee machines having any effect upon the secretary's job. In their replies they anticipated that machines would be likely to change the content of the work which they did, their work interest, their efficiency and output, and the structure of office work generally (Table XI.4).

Table XI.4                      Anticipated changes to a secretary's job which will be brought about by machines

Changes:	LONDON (n=515) %	IQPS (n=170) %	NAPS (n=73) %
<u>Type of work done</u>			
Will leave time for specialist duties, p.a.work, more responsible work	51	29	7
Will be more administrative and clerical work	2	-	-
Will be less filing	2	2	-
Jobs will become more specialised	1	-	-
No more tea making	-	1	-
Many jobs will be taken over by machines	6	1	2
<u>Changes in work interest, advantages and disadvantages</u>			
Will relieve boring, routine jobs	22	15	5
Will make job more interesting	2	-	-
More variety in work	-	1	-
- - - - -			
Will make job less interesting, boring, monotonous	9	-	1
Will end initiative	1	-	-
Less understanding and knowledge of job	1	-	1
<u>Output and efficiency</u>			
Will increase output	7	1	1
Will be quicker, more efficient, save time, ease pressure	48	11	6
Cheaper	1	-	-
Constant work flow	1	1	-
Less tiring	2	1	-
Higher standard of work	1	-	-
Will widen skills	-	2	1
<u>Structure of secretarial and office work</u>			
Less personal contact with boss	37	10	4
End or diminution of shorthand	17	9	4
Typing skill will become paramount	1	-	-
Will be fewer secretarial jobs	8	1	1
Will be fewer shorthand-typist jobs	4	1	1
Will be more audio work, audio secretaries	2	15	5
Will be more typing pools	2	1	1
End of secretarial jobs	3	-	-
More personal assistant jobs	1	-	-
More juniors needed to mind machines	-	3	1
Secretaries will become machine minders	5	4	1
Lower status for secretaries	1	-	1

It is quite apparent that the changes which secretaries believe will be made by the increasing use of machinery in offices are not seen as threatening but, with one main exception, as advantages. Secretaries anticipate that they will be left more time to cope with the non-routine and more responsible and interesting work, and that their efficiency will be greatly enhanced. Routine work will become easier and less oppressive. They foresee, though, a diminution in the use of shorthand and an increase in the number of audio secretaries (especially seen by members of IQPS). The only sizeable disadvantage anticipated is that the personal relationship which exists between the boss and his secretary will be changed, as there will be less contact between them. However, this loss of personal contact is not inevitable. If audio equipment is used sensitively by employers, and they appreciate that personal contact is a commodity highly valued by a secretary, then audio equipment can be used as an aid to efficiency and not as a substitute for a person. Its effect when introduced depends upon the actual work which a secretary has previously been doing. If most of her day consisted of waiting for dictation, sitting in her boss's office while he dictated, and subsequently typing out letters or correspondence, then the introduction of audio machines would be deleterious, since it would replace the only contact with her boss which had existed. If, on the other hand, a secretary had administrative or delegated work to do, then an audio machine would be seen as a time-saving asset; she would

miss the dictation less, as it would not be the only contact she had with her boss. If she had other interesting work to deal with, she would see the stint spent taking dictation as wasteful of time and resources. Consequently audio machinery is a threat only to those who are mainly shorthand-typists and little more.

When secretaries were asked if they could see a time coming when machines would replace the secretary, their answer was a positive 'no' with a mere 10 per cent of London secretaries, 2 per cent of IQPS and none of NAPS replying 'yes'. The feeling that machines would replace secretaries was not found to be related either to the secretary's age or to the size of the organisation for which she worked. It was apparent, however, that secretaries in two large organisations in particular felt their jobs to be threatened, so there may have been some unknown ingredient in their work situation which made them feel more threatened by machinery than others.

Lockwood's view of the function of machines in offices is therefore confirmed by the experience of secretaries in this sample. In the main, machines are seen as aids to efficiency, and as long as shorthand can still be maintained, are expected to be little threat to the future employment of secretaries.



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## CHAPTER XII

### JOB SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction is a concept which has prompted much research and speculation, resulting in the use of a variety of methods and terminology. Some of the conclusions reached have been contradictory and the confused terminology has often meant that findings cannot easily be compared. Enid Mumford has said that 'although most researchers would agree that job satisfaction is made up of a complex set of variables, there is little agreement either on what these variables are or on how they might be measured.'<sup>1</sup>

Fundamentally, job satisfaction describes the gratification of needs which are located in the work situation; the aim of research has been to locate these needs and to discover which elements satisfy them. The interest in the subject has been stimulated by the hope that if employers could discover what satisfied workers, they could structure jobs so as to give optimal rewards.

The two most influential theories in this field have been put forward by Maslow and Herzberg.<sup>2 3</sup> Maslow proposed that people have a hierarchy of needs ranging through biological needs such as hunger and thirst; safety needs - a demand for security; social needs - being accepted and having a sense of belonging; esteem needs - including self-respect and the respect of others; and finally, self-actualising needs such as the opportunity for challenge and growth. Each stage is dependent upon the needs of the previous stage having been gratified, so that, for instance, self-actualisation needs will only occur once physical, security, social and esteem needs have been satisfied.

In contrast Herzberg maintained that people have two basic categories of need, those which motivate people towards an avoidance of deprivation, and those which lead to achievement of potentiality; the former he called 'hygiene factors' which in the work situation would encourage people to avoid job dissatisfaction, and the latter he called 'motivation factors'; these are sought in order to achieve positive job satisfaction. Different factors are relevant to the two types of need; job-context factors include for instance, pay, supervision, security and working conditions, and are 'hygiene factors', while job-content factors are opportunities for responsibility, advancement, growth, achievement and recognition, and are 'motivation factors'.

The conflict between these two theories arises from the fact that Maslow's analysis involves a single dimension of measurement, since any single factor in a work situation could produce either satisfaction or dissatisfaction, whereas Herzberg's analysis divides factors into two mutually exclusive types. Herzberg maintained that when a job-context factor is satisfied, for instance pay, the feelings engendered are not those of satisfaction, but simply lack of dissatisfaction, while a different set of factors provide satisfaction itself.

A more eclectic attitude towards job satisfaction is slowly being evolved, based on the practical application of previous attempts at measurement and more exact use of terminology.  
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Wolf, for instance, has pointed out that the terms 'satisfaction' and 'motivation' are different elements. 'Satisfaction is an end state, while motivation is a force ("drive") to achieve an end state.' Job context and job content, or hygiene and motivator factors, have at different times been described as extrinsic and intrinsic factors or satisfiers and dissatisfiers, and the items they have included have differed from one study



5  
to the other. 6 Wanous and Lawler concluded, having examined many different systems of measurement and definitions of job satisfaction, that 'there is no one best way to measure it'.

Conflicting evidence has been presented about job satisfaction as it applies to women. 7 Beer stated that 'The usual assumption about women employees is that they are not interested in work involvement or intrinsic job satisfactions. Management assumes this because women are usually secondary wage earners and are not career oriented. The assumption is that they are more interested in pay and working conditions.' He found the opposite to be the case; women 'had a need to be challenged by stimulating and self-actualising work'.

8  
Hulin and Smith found that women were generally less satisfied than men workers, because the jobs they did were less well paid, had fewer promotion possibilities and were at a lower level than men's jobs.

9  
Centers and Bugental reported finding little difference in the overall value placed on intrinsic and extrinsic job factors between men and women, except that half of their female respondents mentioned 'good co-workers' as being important to them, whereas only about a third of the male respondents mentioned this. Wolf 10 and Ridgway, on the other hand, found the primary need of women on the shop floor was for good pay and only secondarily for good social relations.

The job satisfaction of office workers has also been the subject of investigation. 11 Williamson and Karras compared women clerical workers and college students, and found that the clerical

workers were more likely to rank 'hygiene factors' as more important, possibly because they did not anticipate having opportunities for advancement and responsibility. Centers and Bugental found that intrinsic job factors were likely to be more highly valued among 'white collar' groups than among 'blue collar' workers, such factors including the chance to use a skill or talent, the interest value of the work, and a feeling of satisfaction derived from the work, and that these factors would be more likely to keep white collar workers in their jobs once these needs were satisfied.<sup>12</sup> Beer ranked the needs of female clerical employees in descending order of self-actualisation, autonomy, social, esteem and security, and felt that, in Maslow's terms 'female clerical employees are at an advanced stage in their need development.'<sup>13</sup> Stansfield<sup>14</sup> reported that women in typing pools did not expect any work satisfaction but that their dissatisfactions were centred around the lack of perceived importance of their work, the lack of personal communications, and the fact that they received no thanks for their efforts.

<sup>15</sup>  
Morse examined the proposition that job satisfaction among white collar workers depended on 'what an individual wants from the world, and what he gets.' She found that the more skilled was the work done, the greater the degree of job satisfaction experienced.

In the present study secretaries were not asked directly whether they were satisfied with their jobs, because such a question

tends to be interpreted differently by each respondent, thus making analysis unreliable. Also, most people give a favourable response to questions asking how they like their jobs. Goldthorpe<sup>16</sup> stated, 'Part of the explanation of this is probably that, as Blauner has suggested, a worker will find it difficult to admit he dislikes his job without thereby threatening his self-respect. For, in our kind of society a man's work tends to be a more important determinant of his self-image than most other of his social activities. Thus, there is considerable psychological pressure upon the individual to say that he finds his job acceptable; to say otherwise may well be tantamount to admitting that he does not find himself acceptable ... Furthermore ... the very fact that men remain in particular jobs may generally be taken to imply some degree of satisfaction with them, relative to other jobs which are in the market.' Instead, secretaries were asked what they liked and disliked most about their jobs, what features they would consider most important in seeking a new job, whether they found their work interesting, and the reasons for having left former jobs.

Features of their jobs which secretaries liked.

Secretaries were asked the open-ended question, 'What do you like most about your present job?' (Appendix 1, question no.64). Many secretaries (44 per cent) named more than one feature of their jobs which they liked. In Appendix 10, all these different items are listed. Table XII.1, however, presents only the first items which secretaries named as the feature of their job they most liked. The replies are grouped into five separate categories.



Table XII.1                      Job features most liked by secretaries

	LONDON (n=515) %	IQPS (n=170) %	NAPS (n=73) %
A. Boss, or bosses	12	7	7
B. Other people at work	31	11	12
C. The firm or organisation	4	3	5
D. Extrinsic factors (e.g. pay, hours, etc.)	7	8	3
E. Intrinsic factors (e.g. variety, responsibility etc.)	42	65	64
No reply	4	6	9
	<hr/> 100 <hr/>	<hr/> 100 <hr/>	<hr/> 100 <hr/>

For every group 'intrinsic factors' were most frequently liked, followed by 'other people at work', although for NAPS and IQPS compared with London secretaries, people at work were given relatively less importance and intrinsic factors relatively more importance.

Within the category of 'intrinsic factors' all three groups gave the greatest importance to the variety they found in their work, followed by the responsibility they held and the opportunities they had for using their initiative or knowledge (Appendix 10). It was suggested in Chapter X that variety and responsibility are related and it would appear that secretaries give considerable weight to these two factors when naming the features of their jobs which they most liked, especially when control over work and freedom from supervision (which are other aspects of responsibility) are added to variety and responsibility (Appendix 10). Morse found

that variety had a very strong connection with feelings of job satisfaction (those who said their work had variety also felt they had a high degree of job satisfaction) and that decision-making opportunities had a less, but still important, effect on the level of job satisfaction.<sup>17</sup>

Other aspects of their work which secretaries liked in the category of 'intrinsic factors' were derived from the interest found in the work, the status given to senior secretaries, the opportunities for learning and advancement and the pleasure and sense of achievement gained from understanding the work (Appendix 10).

The second most liked aspect of work was the relationship with colleagues, and this applied in particular to London secretaries, probably because they were younger than the members of the other two groups.<sup>18</sup> Joan Maizels found that young girl workers placed a greater emphasis upon liking the people with whom they worked than did boys of the same age. A study of young school leavers<sup>19</sup> found that young women in particular 'valued opportunities to meet many people and much more generally than men they appreciated congenial working companions and a pleasant, friendly atmosphere.' Homans (in the U.S.A.) stated that over half the girl clerical workers he studied enjoyed the general friendliness of their group<sup>20</sup> and emphasised this more than any other feature of their work. Similarly, secretaries in the present survey also named the friendly atmosphere or environment at work as the most important aspect of their relations with other people at work (Appendix 10). However, social contact in the work situation assumed less importance with age (Table XII.2).



Table XII.2

Percentage of London secretaries of each  
age group listing their companions at work  
as the feature of their jobs they most liked

Under 20 years (n=42)	20 - 29 years (n=336)	30 - 39 years (n=55)	Over 40 years (n=66)
38%	33%	25%	17%

$\chi^2$ 
(3 d.f.) = 9.58, P< 0.05

It appears, therefore, that of primary importance to the majority of secretaries is the content of their job, followed by the pleasant relationship they have with their colleagues.

Job features which were disliked by secretaries

Secretaries were asked, 'What do you dislike most about your present job?' (Appendix 1, question no.65). 22 per cent of London secretaries stated they could think of nothing at all that they disliked about their jobs. Maizels similarly found that two out of five young workers reported nothing they disliked about their jobs.

Despite the fact that the majority of job features secretaries disliked were concentrated in a few areas, the actual range of complaints was wider than that given for features of their jobs which secretaries liked. Details of disliked features of work can be seen in Appendix 11 (which uses the same categories as those in Appendix 10 and includes all the items listed by secretaries) while Table XII.3 presents an outline of those items which were named first as features of their jobs which secretaries disliked.

✱

It has been suggested that intrinsic factors are those over which secretaries have most influence, which is why they like them most.

Table XII.3            Job features disliked by secretaries

	LONDON (n=515)	IQPS (n=170)	NAPS (n=73)
	%	%	%
A. Boss or bosses	6	8	8
B. Other people at work	6	5	7
C. The firm or organisation	1	3	1
D. Extrinsic factors (e.g. pay, hours, etc.)	18	16	15
E. Intrinsic factors (e.g. lack of variety, boredom, etc.)	45	52	45
Nothing disliked	22	15	20
No reply	2	1	4
	<hr/> 100 <hr/>	<hr/> 100 <hr/>	<hr/> 100 <hr/>

Replies from all three groups followed a similar pattern. Intrinsic factors were the greatest source of dissatisfaction, particular jobs being the aspect most frequently cited. Filing was mentioned by twenty-three London secretaries (5 per cent) and routine typing or copy-typing by eighteen (3.5 per cent). Although filing was disliked, it was recognised as essential and not resented:

'I don't like filing, but I know it's vital!'

'Filing is a bore, but on the whole I adore my job and wouldn't change it for anything.'

Having to make tea or coffee was also disliked, in one case, 'Having to make tea and wash up every afternoon when there is a perfectly adequate arrangement for it which my boss chooses to ignore', being particularly resented.

The particular items most frequently mentioned by London secretaries (Appendix 11) were the dislike of routine work, inactivity between jobs or insufficient work, and filing. These features are the obverse of the qualities which they most liked about their jobs, which were variety, the opportunities for responsibility and initiative, and interesting work. This finding contradicts Herzberg's theory that different factors prompt satisfaction and dissatisfaction with work, assuming that 'likes' can be called satisfactions and 'dislikes' dissatisfactions.

Where conditions of work were stated to be unsatisfactory, they applied mainly to offices which were small, shared, or disliked for other unspecified reasons; other aspects mentioned in this connection were pay, hours of work and the journey to work. Pay had been mentioned as being particularly liked by only 4 per cent of secretaries, which taken alone might have been interpreted as meaning that few were happy with their salaries; however, only 3 per cent of London secretaries cited pay as a feature they disliked. This apparent lack of interest in pay may be due to the feeling that secretaries were being fairly paid for their work and so their earnings were neither a source of pleasure nor displeasure, especially since the majority received salaries within a well-defined range.

Criticisms concerning the boss were centred primarily on the problems of working for more than one person, leading to divided loyalty and competition for work, while criticisms in the category of 'other people at work' were mainly concerned with dislike for



a particular person. Comparatively few secretaries mentioned their boss or other people at work as sources of dislike, no doubt because so many of them had stated they positively liked their bosses and colleagues.

Although there was no significant difference in the various categories of work which were disliked by different age groups, within those categories particular features tended to be emphasised by secretaries of different ages. The under-twenties objected particularly to the routine and dull work and late-night rushes. 'I never finish at 5 p.m. as arranged at the initial interview. I have to do filing and put away files and papers which my boss has had out for reference after he has used them - it makes me feel like a skivvy, tidying up after him.' Pay was also a source of complaint for young secretaries, and since salaries have been found to be related to age (Chapter IX) it is possible that the pay expectations of young secretaries were too high. Wild and Ridgway found that women under twenty-one gave primacy<sup>22</sup> to their financial need.

The range of dislikes described by secretaries in their twenties covered forty-five different items, but half were concentrated on one aspect alone, the inactivity between jobs, or not having enough to do. Criticisms of pay and the problems of travelling to work played another but minor part for this age group.

Secretaries aged thirty to thirty-nine disliked routine work and inactivity although, conversely, too much work was also cited by some of them as a source of dissatisfaction. Inactivity was

also emphasised by the forty to forty-nine age group, while travelling and unpleasant offices were disliked most by those over fifty.

Both the youngest and oldest secretaries seemed to differ from other secretaries in their likes and dislikes. Those aged under twenty valued particularly the companionship at work as well as the variety and interest of the work itself, and were dissatisfied with routine and dull tasks and leaving work late. Those aged over fifty valued a sense of security and particularly disliked difficult travelling conditions and unpleasant offices. That both the youngest and oldest secretaries liked and disliked somewhat different aspects of their work may be partly explained by the fact that both groups have in common an expectation that they will soon leave work, the youngest to marry and the oldest to retire, which may colour their attitudes towards their immediate needs.

It was found that younger secretaries tended to make more complaints about their work than did older secretaries (Table XII.4).

Table XII.4	London secretaries who disliked some aspect of their work, by age			
	Under 20	20 - 29	30 - 39	Over 40
% stating they disliked nothing about their work	19	19	24	41
% naming some aspect of their work which they disliked	81	81	76	59

$\chi^2$  (3 d.f.) = 15.13,  $P < 0.01$

Walker found that among civil servants, those who were older were more satisfied with their jobs than those who were younger.<sup>23</sup>

Possibly as secretaries advance in their careers they find jobs which increasingly satisfy their needs, or alternatively, they adopt a more realistic expectation of their jobs.

### New Job Features

The features of their work which secretaries most liked might differ from those they would seek in a new job. If, for instance, a secretary did not particularly enjoy her job but liked meeting her friends at work, saying that she liked her companions most would not give an accurate picture of the aspects of a job she particularly valued. Rather than companionship she may prefer to have, say, more interesting work, or more pay. Therefore secretaries were asked what features they would consider most important if they were to seek a new job (Appendix 1, question no.63).

A range of ten alternatives were offered and respondents were asked to rank them in order of importance. The alternative features were the same as those which the Alfred Marks Bureau had found to be relevant in an earlier survey of women office workers, and Table XII.5 shows which of these features were considered to be most important by secretaries in the present study.

Unquestionably, for all three groups, the most important feature demanded of a new job was that it should involve interesting work. Of those features which were placed first in order of importance by London secretaries, interesting duties were named twice as often as the next item, starting salary, with all other categories falling a considerable way behind. When, in addition, those items named second in order of importance were considered, interesting duties and salary were again placed as the two most important items, so that 74 per cent of London secretaries placed



Table XII.5                      Most important features of a new job

	LONDON (n=515) %	IQPS (n=170) %	NAPS (n=73) %
Interesting duties	56	61	58
Starting salary	23	15	18
Prospect of promotion	4	8	8
Convenient hours	5	2	1
Good working conditions	5	1	5
Security	1	5	1
Convenient travel	4	2	4
Good fringe benefits	-	1	-
Glamorous firm or organisation	1	-	-
Other	1	5	5
	<hr/> 100 <hr/>	<hr/> 100 <hr/>	<hr/> 100 <hr/>

interesting duties as either first or second in importance, with 53 per cent giving salary a similar priority. Prospects of promotion emerged as the next most important feature, closely followed by convenient hours, good working conditions and convenient travel. Comparison with the survey of women office workers<sup>25</sup> which had previously used this range of alternative responses shows that a similar proportion of office workers had indicated that salaries would be important to them, while 20 per cent fewer office workers than secretaries gave priority to interesting duties. Consequently it may be claimed that secretaries show considerably more concern at having interesting work to do than other office workers.

A reversal in the importance accorded to salary over interesting work was found to be associated with marital status. Secretaries who were either widowed, divorced, or engaged, considered salary a major concern, while the single and married put interest first in importance. This may be due to the fact that the widowed and divorced are usually primary earners, possibly with others to support, while those who were engaged needed to earn as much as possible in order to save for a home. For the engaged, married, divorced and widowed, hours were the next most important consideration, and it may be assumed that this was related to domestic responsibilities, or, for the engaged, to a wish to see their fiancés regularly.

The interest in pay, revealed in the replies to this question, had not been apparent in the replies to questions asking what secretaries liked and disliked about their present jobs. Edwards  
26  
and Kynaston Reeves found that respondents' attitudes to jobs were affected by how well paid they thought themselves to be, and by intrinsic aspects of their work, although what people said was important to them in their job was not a true reflection of these attitudes. The fact that in the present study questions on job likes and dislikes were put in an open-ended form, while that on taking a new job asked for importance to be rated, may account for some of the differences in emphasis. It may also reflect the feeling that pay should conform to an expected level, and once this expectation had been met, other factors assumed



greater importance.

Daniel <sup>27</sup> pointed out that different aspects of their work probably attracted people towards a job, satisfied them while performing a job, and encouraged them to leave the job, and that all were dependent on the context of work for the particular individual. The present findings indicate that this is likely to be the case for secretaries.

#### Interest in work

Secretaries were asked whether they found their work interesting, using a range of levels varying between 'very interesting all the time' to 'very dull all the time'. The replies show that a high proportion did find their work interesting (Table XII.6).

Table XII.6 Interest in work

	LONDON (n=515)	NAPS (n=170)	NAPS (n=73)
	%	%	%
Very interesting all the time	16	24	45
Interesting most of the time	52	55	49
Fairly interesting with dull patches	26	17	5
Mostly rather boring	5	4	1
Very dull all the time	1	-	-
	<hr/> 100 <hr/>	<hr/> 100 <hr/>	<hr/> 100 <hr/>

<sup>28</sup>  
When Dale asked this question of male clerks, he found the replies exhibited a relatively high degree of job satisfaction. However, the favourable response from secretaries was even higher than Dale reported. Whereas 58 per cent of his male clerks had said their work was either very interesting or interesting most of the time, 68 per cent of London secretaries rated their jobs in these two categories. A still higher proportion of IQPS and

NAPS did so, 79 per cent and 94 per cent respectively placing their job's interest in the two top categories. Members of NAPS in particular showed a remarkable level of involvement in their work. It would thus appear that most secretaries both seek and find a considerable degree of interest in their work.

It has already been indicated that jobs were found to be more interesting by secretaries working for larger organisations, by those who worked for the highest levels of management, and by those who were fully occupied. Interest in work, however, seemed to bear no relationship to levels of education, to pay, or to the numbers of bosses for whom a secretary worked.

#### Reasons for leaving jobs

Another dimension of job satisfaction may be gauged by examining the reasons secretaries gave for having left jobs (Appendix 1, question no. 23f). Obviously this could only be applied to former jobs thus excluding 10 per cent of the London sample who were still in their first jobs.

Some employers in central London complained of a high turnover among secretaries, one large organisation stating that as many as two-thirds of their total secretarial staff changed within one year. Younger women tend to change jobs more frequently  
29  
than older women so turnover in central London may simply reflect the relative youth of the secretaries working there. One study, however, found that in central London men were almost as likely to move  
30  
jobs as single women so the problem of turnover in the area is certainly not confined to women office workers.

Analysis of the reasons given by secretaries for having left former jobs was complicated by the fact that respondents were at different stages in their careers, and some had changed their jobs more frequently than others. All the reasons given by London secretaries for having left former jobs, irrespective of the year, or the stage in their individual career, were firstly summed, in order to obtain a general outline of the reasons why they had left their jobs (Table XII.7). Included in these figures are jobs secretaries once did which could not be classified as office work, but were either alternative occupations or temporary situations such as au pair or student work, and these accounted for 14 per cent of all the jobs which had formerly been held by secretaries; 23 per cent of all secretaries had at some time performed a job which could not be considered as office work.

Table XII.7                      Reasons for London secretaries having left former jobs

	numbers of reasons
To travel or move	220
Extrinsic factors (pay, hours, etc.)	193
Intrinsic factors (boredom, no promotion, etc.)	188
Family, domestic, marriage, children, health, parents	120
Improvement, betterment, experience, ambition	120
Promotion, transfer	101
Firm or organisation (closed, moved, merged, etc.)	89
Relations at work	53



Table XII.7 suggests that geographical mobility is a very important factor in job turnover. The category 'to travel or move' included situations where daughters moved house with their parents, wives with husbands when husbands changed jobs, changing a place of residence at marriage, or moving to another place to work. However, a considerable number of reasons put into this category were stated simply as 'to travel'.<sup>31</sup> Ethel Venables has said that many young men feel that 'the years between leaving school and coming to terms with the realities of adult life are short and too valuable to be missed', and that they 'see this period as a never-to-be-repeated interlude between a fairly restrictive childhood and the inevitable and somewhat joyless responsibilities of marriage and parenthood.' The fact that many secretaries have left their jobs to travel leads one to believe that girls as well as boys wish to take every opportunity to get the most out of life before responsibilities overtake them. This is supported by the finding that 21 per cent of the sample of secretaries working in central London had moved to the capital in order to find a job there, presumably to enlarge their horizons while they had the opportunity (Appendix 1, question no.53).

After travel and moving came extrinsic factors, which included all conditions of work such as pay, hours, offices or travelling problems, closely followed by intrinsic factors including boredom, lack of prospects, lack of responsibility and so on. The category covering 'improvement, betterment' etc. may have been another way of describing an improvement in pay, or responsibility, or status of employer.

It might have been expected that the main reason why any group of women left their jobs would be related to domestic or family considerations. That this factor did not figure more highly among secretaries in central London may be explained by the composition of the secretarial work force. Those secretaries who have families tend to work nearer to their homes. Hence the sample does not include those women who either left the secretarial work force when they had children or returned to work nearer to their homes.

It is interesting to note that although a high proportion of secretaries eminently enjoyed both companionship at work and the good relationship they had with their bosses, very few (5 per cent) of the reasons given for having left their jobs were due to dissatisfaction with work relationships. It may be that social relationships in offices are usually good, and if a particular person is disliked, alternative pleasure can be found in the company of others.

Reasons for having left jobs were related to the stage in respondents' careers (Appendix 1, question no. 23). It was found that those in their first jobs gave extrinsic factors as the primary reasons for leaving, followed by the desire for improvement, and then to travel or move. Extrinsic factors were increasingly less important as a secretary progressed through her career. Fewer had left their jobs to improve or better themselves, as their career advanced. More secretaries gave travelling and moving as reasons for leaving second and subsequent jobs, which may be interpreted either as a desire to experience as much of



the world as possible before settling down, or simply that more were getting married and consequently moving residence.

Conversely, dissatisfaction with intrinsic factors played an increasingly important part in encouraging secretaries to leave their jobs as they progressed through their careers.

Where secretaries said they had left their jobs because they had been promoted, such movement tended to occur early in their careers. This can be explained by many secretaries having begun work in more junior capacities, for example as shorthand-typists; their promotion to secretary occurred as soon as they had gained experience in basic skills.

In order to see whether there had been any changes in the reasons why respondents had left jobs recently, as opposed to in former years, a comparison was made of some of the reasons why secretaries left their first and second jobs, a) before 1950, b) between 1950 and 1959, and c) between 1960 and 1969, the assumption being made that respondents would be of similar ages at the initial stages of their careers. However, it should be pointed out that many of the respondents in their first jobs were not secretaries but shorthand-typists, typists, clerks, and so on, hence these figures are not necessarily reasons why secretaries left their jobs. Three types of reason for leaving jobs were selected for comparison (Table XII.8), extrinsic factors, intrinsic factors and promotion.

There has been very little difference over the years in the proportions of those who left their first or second jobs over dissatisfaction with extrinsic factors. A considerable change has occurred over the years, however, in the proportions



Table XII.8

Reasons for leaving first and second jobs  
in different years (London secretaries)

	1st jobs			2nd jobs		
	Percentage leaving their first jobs:			Percentage leaving their second jobs:		
	Before 1950 (n=71)	1950-1959 (n=77)	1960-1969 (n=287)	Before 1950 (n=49)	1950-1959 (n=54)	1960-1969 (n=240)
Reasons for leaving:						
Extrinsic factors	21	19	18	10	11	12
Intrinsic factors	1	10	14	-	7	9
Promoted (so described)	4	9	12	4	7	8
Other reasons (e.g.travel, domestic)	74	62	56	86	75	71
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

who left their first and second jobs because of dissatisfaction with intrinsic factors of their work. Considerably more of those who changed their jobs in the 1960s as compared to earlier years did so as a result of discontent with this aspect of their work. This changing pattern could be explained by a rise in expectations that a job should be intrinsically rewarding; when these expectations were not fulfilled they were sought in another job elsewhere. On the other hand, secretaries' jobs may have actually become less rewarding, if, for instance, a greater proportion of the working day is taken up with routine work. Another explanation may be that because many secretaries began their careers in more mundane jobs, for instance as shorthand-typists, the progression to a secretary's job was a means of satisfying the demand for greater interest, variety or responsibility.

That promotion takes place early in a career is confirmed by the observation that rather fewer secretaries said they were promoted from their second jobs than their first, although the difference is not striking. However, it does appear that slightly more secretaries tended to be promoted during the 1960s than was formerly the case. This may be because an increasing shortage has led to a greater incentive for employers to promote persons to be secretaries from more junior positions. It should be borne in mind, however, that promotion may have meant different things to different secretaries. It could mean promotion from shorthand-typist to secretary, or from a less responsible to a more responsible secretarial position, or from working for a more junior to a more senior individual.

Although it could not be ascertained what factors would prompt secretaries in the London sample to leave their present jobs, they were all asked about their future plans (Appendix 1, question no.57). The older the secretary, the greater was the likelihood of her intending to remain in her present job; 57 per cent of the under-twenties, 59 per cent of those in their twenties, 69 per cent in their thirties and 82 per cent who were forty or over, were intending to remain in their jobs. These figures are statistically significant ( $\chi^2$ , 3 d.f. = 13.38,  $P < 0.01$ ). Forty-four secretaries (9 per cent) were found to be intending to leave their jobs. Although these secretaries were not asked why they intended to leave, three spontaneously stated that they were leaving to be married, or to have a baby. The majority of

intending leavers, however, were single women in their twenties; they were representative of the whole group in terms of the salaries they earned. The factors they had mentioned as disliking in their work, and what they would consider most important in seeking a new job, were examined to see if they provided some explanation of their intention to leave. Only five secretaries were found to have mentioned disliking any extrinsic features of their jobs, none of which were concerned with pay. Well over half of the intending job changers did mention intrinsic factors they disliked in their work, the highest number complaining that they had too much routine work, followed by those who were not kept busy, were not used to the full, or who had insufficient responsibility or no prospects of promotion.

When the factors they stated would be important to them in a new job were examined, it was found that twenty-nine out of forty-four (two-thirds) of intending job leavers put first in importance 'interesting duties', with only five mentioning salary. Placed second in order of importance was promotion, again coming ahead of an interest in salary. Far more intending leavers put interest first in order of importance than the general sample of secretaries had done; whereas approximately twice as many of the whole sample had put interest first compared with salary, almost six times as many prospective leavers put interest above salary.

It is likely, therefore, that among those who planned to leave their present jobs, the intention to leave was prompted by a desire to find more intrinsically rewarding work, rather than to obtain more money.



Considering together the responses to all the questions relating to job satisfaction, a striking feature emerges, that is the relative importance placed upon intrinsic factors of work. Not only did these factors constitute the greatest source of pleasure and complaint in their present jobs, they were of primary importance when secretaries sought a new job. It can therefore be concluded that they are the most important determinants of job satisfaction in this particular group of working women.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### PROMOTION AND OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY

A secretary's career depends on the opportunities given to her for promotion. This may apply to her reaching the position of secretary in the first place as well as to her leaving it for more responsible work. The likelihood of promotion is an important factor in determining whether or not a secretary's job is an occupation which provides long-term career prospects.

It has been said for many years that a secretary's job offers women more opportunities for advancement than do most other types of employment.

'The hope of advancement has always been one of the cherished possessions of the clerical group. For many women it involved the ambition to rise to the top of the clerical occupations, perhaps to a private secretaryship or the head of the stenographic bureau. To a few women it has meant the hope of becoming an executive or an independent business woman.' (1929).<sup>1</sup>

'The old adage "there is plenty of room at the top of the tree" is peculiarly applicable to secretarial work.' (1928).<sup>2</sup>

'Secretarial work offers chances of advancement because the private secretary is brought into close touch with men and women in important positions' (1930).<sup>3</sup>

'That there is a future for women in secretarial work cannot be denied, however, and every girl who is anxious to achieve independence and an interesting career should give thought to its possibilities.' (1933).<sup>4</sup>

Today, for many, the feeling persists that a secretary's job is the best entry into management or executive positions for ambitious women. The degree course at the University of Strathclyde (Chapter V) is designed to enable women to become secretaries while at the same time qualifying them to move up when the opportunities arise. It also recognizes that until equal opportunities for women exist in commerce and industry a secretary's job is still often the only acceptable means of entry to management available to them.

For men, clerical work has always been a traditional means of upward mobility especially into managerial positions. The influx of women into offices has meant that promotion prospects for men have improved. Since many women were in the employment market only temporarily, they have often not sought, or been expected to need, opportunities for promotion. As a result, there has been an attitude of indifference towards the promotion of women at all levels: 'Study after study in recent years has pointed out that women generally, quite apart from any question of promotion to top jobs, tend not to be offered the same chances of training for skilled work or promotion as men nor to be motivated by their education or work environment to take them; that they tend to be segregated into 'women's work', devalued by unequal pay, treated as lacking in commitment to their work and as unsuitable to be in authority over men, and trained and encouraged not merely to accept these conditions but to think them right'.

It is difficult to assess how many women have in fact made the step from secretary into executive. An investigation

of women executives carried out by the London Chamber of  
Commerce in 1966<sup>8</sup> found that just under a third of all women  
executives had begun work as secretaries, with over half of  
those who were working as company secretaries or in advertising  
and publishing having started in this way. The report

suggested that a secretarial training<sup>9</sup> may offer an opportunity  
to a capable girl who does not want, or cannot afford to

study for a profession.' Hunt, in 1968, reported that  
10.3 per cent of women working in managerial and directional  
capacities had attended a 'secretarial, commercial college',  
which may indicate that many of them had in fact been

secretaries at one time. In the BBC, Fogarty et al.<sup>10</sup>  
found that of the twenty-two women interviewed holding management  
or production positions, six had entered as secretaries or  
clerks. Although entering the management/production  
ladder in this way had been common some years previously,  
widened opportunities for entry had meant that the proportion  
entering such jobs via secretarial work had fallen. In a large  
international organisation in the same study, women executives  
advised against girls, particularly graduates, attempting to  
achieve senior positions by entering as secretaries. 'They  
thought that it would in fact be a handicap, partly because  
the first vital years in a company would be wasted, and young  
men would have gone past the first watershed in the promotion  
race by the time a young woman had emerged from being a  
secretary.'<sup>11</sup>



An attempt was made in the present investigation to discover whether secretaries were interested in promotion; whether promotion had been achieved by them in the past; whether opportunities were available to them in the future; and what features of promotion were most important to them. In terms of career, do secretaries hold a central position, having reached it from a more junior office job and having the prospect of further promotion; is it the summit of a long career; or is it a 'dead end' job, with women beginning and ending as secretaries?

Apparent promotion may be achieved by altering the name of the job while keeping the actual work the same. Both secretaries and employers remarked on the way this was happening in offices. People who were formerly called shorthand-typists, typists, or even clerks, were now called secretaries, a situation which has been described as 'status drift'.<sup>12</sup> The demand situation in central London has meant that in order to attract applicants, jobs are said to be open to secretaries rather than, say, shorthand-typists. Many employers maintained that a large proportion of those employed as secretaries in London were guilty of misrepresentation. The blame for this was apportioned among, a) secretaries, for calling themselves such when they were not; b) employers, for using this means to attract job applicants; c) employment agencies, for encouraging the situation; and d) large organisations, for awarding a secretary to lower levels of management in order to enhance the latter's prestige. At the other end of the scale, 'real' secretaries were calling themselves and being

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called, personal assistants, in order to maintain the former differential.

The employers who took part in this survey were asked if questionnaires could be handed to any secretaries they employed, consequently the decision as to who was or was not a secretary was left to the employer. It was explained in Chapter II that in a few cases this gave rise to problems of definition; most of these cases appeared to represent an attempt on the part of the employer not to hurt the feelings of a typist or shorthand-typist who might consider herself a secretary, even though the employer did not think she was. Respondents in the central London sample, when asked to give the title of the positions they held (Appendix 1, question no.23a) gave a wide range of designations; 65 per cent simply called themselves secretaries, with another 6 per cent calling themselves 'secretary/personal assistant', 5 per cent 'private secretary' or 'personal secretary', 4 per cent 'secretary/shorthand-typist', and 3 per cent 'personal assistant'. Other titles (none was used by more than five secretaries) were:

- Administrative assistant
- Assistant personnel officer
- Assistant
- Audio-secretary
- Audio-typist
- Bi-lingual secretary
- Branch secretary
- Clerk
- Clerical officer
- Clerk typist
- Copy typist
- Dental secretary
- Junior secretary
- Medical secretary
- Supervisor
- Personal assistant/other category
- Parliamentary secretary
- Secretarial assistant, assistant secretary
- Senior secretary
- Senior typist
- Secretary/other category
- Secretary receptionist



Secretary/translator  
Secretary/typist  
Trainee secretary  
Typist

Bearing in mind that employers and employees might call the same jobs by different names, and that in allowing questionnaires to be handed to 'secretaries' employers recognised the ambiguities in both function and title, it was reassuring to find that most secretaries agreed with their employers in terming themselves as such. There were, however, some 9 per cent of respondents in central London who either added the term 'personal assistant' to their title, or substituted it entirely for the word 'secretary'.

The other job titles used appeared to denote differences in job function and status, and may have been a means by which employers communicated to job applicants what would be expected of them in their job. It might be anticipated, for instance, that 'secretary/shorthand-typist' would be expected to do mainly shorthand-typing, that a 'personal' or 'private' secretary would be working for one person, that a 'secretary/receptionist' would be a receptionist who is expected to deal with some correspondence, while a 'senior secretary' would be employed in a situation where there were junior secretaries as well. That this is so was confirmed by looking at the job content of those holding such positions. Hence, it may be the way in which some employers, while recognising that titles have been changed, make some attempt at pre-selection when seeking applicants for positions. On the other hand, the titles given may also have been a means by which the respondent was communicating the nature of her job or its status to the investigator.

Despite employers' fears, many respondents were not as sensitive about their titles as was anticipated, as self-descriptions like 'audio-typist', 'clerk', 'clerk-typist', 'copy-typist' 'typist' and 'telephonist' demonstrate. In fact employers themselves may have tended to enhance their own status by calling their non-secretarial office workers 'secretary' although analysis of the job content of these employees indicated that most of them were doing jobs which were entitled 'secretary' by others.

When those who gave the name of their jobs as 'personal assistant' were investigated, it was found that they were older than average (only two being less than twenty-five years) and, possibly as a consequence of their age, they received considerably higher earnings than average, well over half earning more than £1,400 p.a. They worked for all levels of management, with salaries related very much to the status of their boss. However, their responsibilities, in terms of job-content, were not significantly different from the range of responsibilities held by London secretaries in general. It is not known whether the title 'personal assistant' would have been confirmed by their bosses, but assuming so, it appears to be adopted by those who were older and earning more, as a means of expressing seniority rather than additional responsibility. Surprisingly, rather fewer of them than average worked for one person only, so it is a possibility that for some the term 'personal assistant' may have been a means of acquiring compensatory status, if they considered that working for more than one person had a low status.



Members of IQPS and NAPS (The Institute of Qualified Private Secretaries and the National Association of Personal Secretaries) might have been expected to entitle their jobs as 'personal' or 'private' secretary more often, as a reflection of the names of their two organisations, and indeed this was the case. Whereas only 5 per cent of London secretaries referred to themselves in this way, 22 per cent of IQPS and 23 per cent of NAPS members did so. Only 2 per cent of IQPS and 3 per cent of NAPS referred to themselves as 'personal assistant' while 8 per cent of members were entitled 'secretary/personal assistant' and 4 per cent 'senior secretary'. These latter two figures were similar to those found in the London sample, so the differences between the groups are due mainly to an increased use of the terms 'personal' and 'private' and a decreased use of the term 'personal assistant'. Since one of the aims of both organisations is to enhance the status of the job of secretary, calling it by a different name would seem to be defeating their own ends. The difference in response between the groups does suggest, however, that titles were more likely to represent what secretaries called themselves, rather than what employers called the jobs they did.

To see how most secretaries had started their working lives respondents were asked about their first jobs (Appendix 1, question no.23). Irrespective of the year in which the respondents started work, 33 per cent of all London secretaries had entered their first job as shorthand-typists, 11 per cent as typists or clerk-typists, 7 per cent as clerks, and 3 per cent as general office workers; 23 per cent began as secretaries, with a further 7 per cent as junior or trainee secretaries. The remaining 16 per cent



began work in a variety of capacities. Hence, many secretaries in the sample had achieved some upward mobility, at least in terms of their job title, over half having begun their working life as typists, clerks, general office workers or shorthand-typists. <sup>13</sup> Maizels found that girl school-leavers who intended to take up clerical work assessed their chances of promotion highly and in fact, when the school leavers' careers were followed up, it was the girl office workers who had achieved more upward mobility than any other group. For such girls, movement up to a private secretarial position represents a considerable degree of mobility.

In order to examine the proposition that many more secretaries now than in the past come straight from a training institution to begin their working life as a secretary, the titles of first jobs held by respondents were related to the year in which the jobs began. Some interesting trends emerged. Selecting five job categories only, secretary, shorthand-typists, typist, clerk and general office worker, changes over the years can be seen in the proportions who began their careers in these different occupational categories (Table XIII.1)

Although the numbers who began work before 1950 make comparisons tentative, it can be seen that the proportion who began their working life as secretaries increased in the late 1960s by a significant proportion ( $\chi^2$ , 4 d.f., = 13.67,  $P < 0.01$ ), confirming the subjective impressions of both secretaries and employers. Conversely, those who began work as shorthand-typists significantly diminished

Table XIII.1                      Changes in first jobs over the years  
for London secretaries

	Before 1940 (n=43) %	1940- 1949 (n=32) %	1950- 1959 (n=78) %	1960- 1964 (n=140) %	1965- 1969 (n=199) %
Secretary	9	6	10	14	24
Shorthand-typist	44	41	50	34	25
Typist	14	9	6	4	3
Clerk	12	9	8	11	3
General office work	-	6	1	5	3
Other jobs	21	29	25	32	42
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

by about the same proportion between the early and the late 1960s ( $\chi^2$ , 4 d.f., = 17.56,  $P < 0.01$ ). It is probable, therefore, that shorthand-typists were considerably more likely to be calling themselves secretaries from 1965 onwards. It was obviously not uncommon, however, for some women to begin work as secretaries even before the Second World War.

The number who began work as shorthand-typists has fluctuated, but nevertheless at all times constituted a substantial proportion of those who became secretaries, although the proportion who first worked as a shorthand-typist decreased after the 1950s.

The pattern for typists and clerks was similar; except for the pre-war years, relatively few secretaries started as typists or clerks, possibly because most employers required their secretaries to have a knowledge of shorthand as well. There was an increase

in the proportion who began as clerks early in the 1960s; perhaps staff shortages encouraged employers to promote more easily from clerical work. An increasing use of dictating machines has also meant that shorthand is no longer an indispensable skill for a secretary.

Social class appears to bear some relationship to the first jobs held by secretaries (Table XIII.2).

Table XIII.2                      First jobs held by London secretaries according to father's occupation when the secretary was aged twelve (social class)

	Social class				
	I (n=59) %	II (n=164) %	III (n=66) %	IV (n=117) %	V (n=30) %
First job title:					
Secretary	22 )	20 )	15 )	10 )	7 )
	) 29	) 23	) 15	) 11	) 7
Personal or private secretary	7 )	3 )	- )	1 )	- )
Secretary/shorthand-typist	5	4	-	1	-
Junior secretary	2	5	6	5	13
Shorthand-typist	27	29	44	42	30
Typist	5	2	6	9	7
Clerk-typist	-	3	3	2	3
Clerk	5	4	12	8	23
General office work	5	2	3	3	7
Other jobs	22	28	11	19	10
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

With the exception of secretaries from social class I backgrounds, the greatest proportion of whom began work as secretaries, the majority started their careers as shorthand-typists, although considerably more of those from social class III than any other group did so. Those who began work as secretaries were much



more likely to come from social classes I and II. This may be because they were more concerned with status than girls from other backgrounds, or because they tended to be trained at secretarial colleges which might have encouraged such an expectation.

An association was also found between level of educational achievement and first jobs. The higher the educational standard, the greater was the likelihood of respondents having begun work as secretaries. Whereas 30 per cent of those with 'A' levels began work as secretaries, 19 per cent of those with 'O' levels did so, and 6 per cent of those with no qualifications. The latter were more likely to have begun as shorthand-typists or clerks. About a third of all respondents with qualifications other than GCE 'A' level began work as shorthand-typists, while only 10 per cent of those with 'A' levels did so.

Since social class and education tend to be related, the two associations are likely to be a reflection of the same situation; girls with professional or managerial backgrounds who have a good educational standard are more likely than others to begin work as secretaries. The careers of these women begin at a different stage of the secretarial employment hierarchy. Many employers and secretaries, however, would dispute the right of these secretaries to call themselves such until they had gained some experience of the work situation.

The considerable interest shown by secretaries in promotion has already been discussed in Chapters VI and XII; 29 per cent of London secretaries placed it among the first three most important features they would seek in a new job, and 24 per cent entered the occupation in the first place as a 'stepping' stone to other jobs.

In order to enquire further into this, secretaries were asked, 'When you apply for a job, are you interested in promotion prospects?' (Appendix 1, question no.54), to which 78 per cent of the London sample, 88 per cent of IQPS and 84 per cent of NAPS replied 'yes'. This answer did not necessarily mean that their expressed interest would in fact play a part in any real job decision made by them, although it was noted that those intending to leave their jobs had felt promotion was of more than usual importance. Nevertheless, the high proportion showing interest, establishes that in principle at least, promotion is potentially of considerable concern to secretaries. It has been found elsewhere, <sup>14</sup> in a comparison between workers on the shop floor, in offices and among supervisory and technical grades, that there was a discrepancy between an expressed interest in promotion and taking action which would achieve promotion. Whereas many workers said they were interested in promotion, fewer of them translated their interest into positive action. They had possibly expressed an interest in promotion because they felt it was expected of them.

Interest in promotion among London secretaries was found to be related to age and marital status. The younger the secretary, the greater was the expressed interest in promotion prospects. The single declared the greatest interest, followed by the married, the divorced and widowed in that order. It would appear that since the youngest were also more likely to be single, promotion assumes less importance upon marriage.

As the term 'promotion' might mean different things to different secretaries, they were asked which features of promotion they would consider to be the most important (Appendix 1, question no.55) -  
Table XIII.3

Table XIII.3                      Most important features of promotion

	LONDON (n=515)			IQPS (n=170)			NAPS (n=73)		
	Placed - 1st	2nd	1st+ 2nd	1st	2nd	1st+ 2nd	1st	2nd	1st+ 2nd
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Promotion features:									
Increase in pay	37	31	68	19	41	60	23	34	57
Higher status boss	5	13	18	8	14	22	10	14	24
Change in title	7	11	18	8	6	14	10	7	17
Own office	2	9	11	1	5	6	-	10	10
More responsibility	40	20	60	51	21	72	48	18	66
Higher status firm or employer	3	3	6	7	6	13	3	5	8
Other	4	3	7	6	4	10	1	1	2
No reply	2	10	-	3	5	11			
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	

Looking at those features which were placed first in order of importance, it is clear that all three groups considered more responsibility to be the most important feature of promotion. Among the London sample, however, an increase in pay was considered relatively more important than among members of IQPS and NAPS. This may be because members of the two secretarial organisations earned more than the London sample, or it may indicate that members of IQPS and NAPS placed a higher than usual value upon responsibility.



When those features of promotion which were ranked second in order of importance are considered, among the London sample an increase in pay was put first or second by 68 per cent and an increase in responsibility by 60 per cent of secretaries. So although more London secretaries rated pay above responsibility in their two most important features, a greater proportion considered an increase in responsibility of primary importance. Taking first and second choices together, having a higher status boss and a change in job title emerged as the next most important factors for all three groups.

The expression of interest in pay was related to the earnings of secretaries; the higher the salary of the secretary, the less importance pay tended to assume as a feature of promotion (Table XIII.4)

Table XIII.4      Pay as the most important feature of promotion according to earnings (London sample)

	Number in each pay category	Number rating pay as most important promotion feature	Percentage
Pay:			
Less than £800 p.a.	22	12	54
£800 - £900 p.a.	103	40	39
£1,000 - £1,100 p.a.	193	78	40
£1,200 - £1,300 p.a.	118	36	30
£1,400 - £1,500 p.a.	47	12	25
More than £1,500 p.a.	23	2	9

( $\chi^2$ , 5 d.f. = 15.87,  $P < 0.01$ )

This finding indicates that above a certain level (in this case around the median pay), interest in pay diminishes as a desirable aspect of promotion. Hence, once an expected level of pay is achieved it ceases to be of continuing concern. There was no association between earnings and responsibility, however; secretaries at all salary levels seemed to value increased responsibility.

It is interesting to note that working for a person of a higher status was not considered of great importance when it came to promotion (Table XIII.3) although this may be attributed to the expected association between having a higher status boss and increased pay and responsibility.

Respondents were asked whether they felt there were any opportunities of advancement open to them in their present jobs (Appendix 1, question no.56). Most secretaries in London (58 per cent) believed that they had no prospects of promotion; a little under one third thought such a possibility did exist, while 5 per cent felt certain that they had a chance for promotion ahead of them, (Table XIII.5).

Table XIII.5      Prospects of promotion in present job

	LONDON (n=515) %	IQPS (n=170) %	NAPS (n=73) %
No prospects	58	53	63
Possibility of promotion	32	38	26
Certain promotion	5	4	5
Not known	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

The presence of promotion possibilities was found to decrease with age while, conversely, the number who stated they had no promotion possibilities increased with age (Table XIII.6) This is likely to be a result of the probability that many younger secretaries were in junior positions so were more likely to see promotion ahead, while the older ones were more likely to have already achieved any possible promotion open to them. Nevertheless, 40 per cent of all secretaries under thirty years of age felt they had no promotion prospects.

Table XIII.6 Age and prospects of promotion for London secretaries

	Under 20 (n=42) %	20 - 29 (n=336) %	30 - 39 (n=55) %	40 and over (n=66) %
No promotion prospects	40	56	56	82
Possible or certain promotion prospects	57	39	40	17

( $\chi^2$ , 3 d.f. = 20.49,  $P < 0.001$ )

Perceived promotion was also related to the status of the person for whom secretaries worked. Those who felt they had the greatest chances were working for operational management, while those who felt they had the least were working for executive management and professional persons (Table XIII.7)

Those who foresaw either certain or possible promotion described the openings available to them. The type of promotion most commonly anticipated was that associated with working for a boss of a higher status: 'I shall probably move from Director's



Table XIII.7

Promotion prospects according to status of boss

	Executive management (n=68)	Senior management (n=116)	Operational management (n=123)	Professional (n=101)	Other status (n=73)
	%	%	%	%	%
No promotion prospects	72	57	50	73	58
Certain or possible promotion prospects	28	43	50	27	42

$(\chi^2_{,4} \text{ d.f.}, = 15.72, P < 0.01)$

secretary to Chairman's secretary.' It was said that such promotion might be achieved by applying for jobs with a higher status boss elsewhere in the same company when they became vacant, or by transferring to other departments. One secretary said that when a more senior secretary in the company left, all the secretaries moved up a step. Others seemed to be waiting for 'dead men's (or rather women's) shoes', 'The Senior Manager's secretary retires next year!' Some were waiting for their present boss to be promoted, when they would assume more seniority, 'I shall be promoted when my boss is', and, 'My boss will become the Senior Partner soon, so I shall be the number one secretary'.

Becoming a more senior secretary in terms of factors other than boss's status were mentioned:

'I will soon have my own shorthand-typist.'

'I shall be working for one person only, the Director, rather than for the Company Secretary and Accountant as well.'

'As the company continues to expand so my importance as the Manager's secretary will increase.'

A change in title (and possibly function) was anticipated by some, for example:

'I shall change from secretary/receptionist to personal secretary.'

'I may become a senior executive secretary.'

Many hoped to become personal assistants, indicating that they felt such a job was different in nature from a secretary's:

'With work and ambition it is possible to leave secretarial work completely and become a personal assistant.'

'When the firm expands I'll be a p.a. and have my own secretary.'

Increased pay, responsibility and interest, while still doing what was essentially the same job, was cited as promotion by several respondents.

The possibility of promotion from secretarial work to non-secretarial work was much less common; 4 per cent of all the sample felt these chances did exist, representing 10 per cent of all those who had a possible or certain prospect of promotion.

Examples were:

'I could become a Media Manager, then deal with recruitment advertising.' (secretary in an advertising agency)

'I could deal with the actual broking.'

'My firm encourages promotion both from typist to secretary, and secretary to assistant management, then management' (marketing company).

'From secretary, to Assistant Director, to Director.'

Others thought they could become personnel officers, assistant managers, administrators, or supervisors. It was sometimes acknowledged that such advancement would require additional training.

These latter opportunities indicate that the secretary's job can indeed be a stepping stone to more senior positions, and that a secretary who really wished to progress could find a job where such possibilities existed. One secretary said,



'My job is what I make it - I understand I could go far.'

However, many did not wish to progress in this way, and would not seek any additional advancement:

'I can only get promotion in terms of salary because I don't want another job.'

'There is no promotion for me because I look for a job suitable to my ability rather than one which will offer promotion. I would not let my working life take precedence over my personal life, and promotion usually means overtime and utter devotion to one's work.'

Others did not want promotion because, 'I can learn so much already where I am', or because 'I am so happy in my work.' A secretary aged twenty-five said, 'As I have reached my aim in life as a Private Secretary, and am extremely happy in my work, promotion does not enter my mind as it would mean abandoning the work I am happy doing.'

Where secretaries felt they had no promotion prospects, some clarified their position by saying they were already holding the most senior job, and there was no further avenue open to them: 'I already hold the most senior position in our City branch (of a bank). A secretary aged twenty-three remarked, 'I am already holding the highest secretarial job I can get, and there's nowhere to go from here.'

One may conclude from the diversity of these replies that promotion prospects vary considerably. Most secretaries have none, and where they do exist, the majority are in terms of becoming secretary to a higher-status person; this, nevertheless, is likely

to bring in its wake increased pay, responsibility and interest (Chapter VIII). Secretaries were obviously aware of an occupational hierarchy in these terms, as the stress laid on becoming a personal assistant indicated. There are, however, ways of advancing out of secretarial work despite the limiting factor that employers tend to take on graduates for management positions. Some secretaries, though, are not at all interested in promotion, being happy as they are.

Morse<sup>15</sup> reported that job satisfaction was influenced by chances of promotion, 'the greater the individual's chances for promotion the more satisfied he is ... the greater his unfulfilled desire for promotion, the less satisfied he is.' If more secretaries saw they had promotion prospects, whether they chose to take advantage of them or not, there might be considerably more satisfaction to be found within the occupation.

Three-quarters of those secretaries who felt certain they had a chance of promotion were intending to stay in their present jobs, as were well over half of those with either no promotion prospects or only a possibility of promotion. Hence, while promotion prospects may have some effect upon the stability of the secretarial work force, it does not appear to be a critical factor.

Another way of testing what secretaries felt to be the possible channels of advancement open to them, was to ask what job would represent the peak of their career. The question was put in an open-ended form (Appendix 1, question no.58), and the results fell into the categories described in Table XIII.8.

Table XIII.8      Jobs perceived as the peak of a secretarial career

	LONDON (n=515) %	IQPS (n=170) %	NAPS (n=73) %
1. Personal assistant to ... (e.g. an important person, Prime Minister, top man, director, editor, etc.)	17	23	27
2. Secretary to ... (an important person, etc.)	13	24	10
3. Change in status or function expressed by a change in job title (e.g. personal assistant, executive secretary, etc.)	17	15	10
4. Leaving secretarial work (to take boss's job, become manager, director, etc.)	10	9	8
5. Change in job itself (e.g. more interesting work, opportunity for travel, etc.)	9	5	7
6. Other	10	10	19
7. No reply or don't know	24	14	19
	<hr/> 100 <hr/>	<hr/> 100 <hr/>	<hr/> 100 <hr/>

30 per cent of London secretaries measured the ultimate in a secretary's career in relation to the status of the person for whom she worked. These findings reflect the apparent satisfaction felt by many in their present role, together with a possible modification of any past aspirations through learning what the realistic expectations of a secretary's job may be.

Although a large proportion saw their success in terms of the person for whom they would be working, they did not all hope



to become personal assistants. Many were satisfied with the term 'secretary'. This may mean that many could see no real difference between the two terms. Despite having a vested interest in the retention of the title 'secretary', many members of IQPS and NAPS (23 and 27 per cent respectively) saw the peak of their careers in terms of a personal assistantship.

It seems that although secretaries said that responsibility and pay represented the most valued aspects of promotion to them, and said that they did not consider a higher status boss particularly important (Table XIII.3), in fact they measured their achievement by their boss's status. This suggests that the system of promotion adopted by employers, in terms of their own hierarchy, has been applied to their secretaries, even though secretaries themselves valued other aspects more highly. Employers may have assumed that because they value hierarchy so greatly, their secretaries feel the same. It may also be (as will be discussed further in Chapter XV) that some employers prefer secretaries to measure their own occupational status according to their boss's, rather than by the responsibilities involved in a particular job. If secretaries were part of the normal occupational hierarchy, they might be seen as a threat, rather than a support, to a particular boss.

In an attempt to find out more about the possibilities for secretaries to move into other occupations and what those occupations were, secretaries were asked if they knew anyone who used to be a secretary but who had since adopted a different occupation

(apart from housewife) - Appendix 1, question no.60. Four hundred and twenty-five examples were given by the London sample, covering a range of one hundred and ten occupations into which former secretaries had moved. \*

The occupations could be classified into three types:

- a) those which might have been attained through promotion, or could have been learned while working as a secretary in a particular occupational setting, or could be undertaken employing the same skills as a secretary had already (for example manager, public relations office, translator, journalist);
- b) those which required a completely different training (for example, teacher, nurse, doctor)
- c) those which were different occupations but which required little or no further training (for example, model, receptionist).

By classifying the jobs into the above categories, it was necessary to make some subjective decisions, since the circumstances surrounding the job changes were not known, nor were the exact jobs themselves; for instance, some of those described as 'teachers' might have been teaching secretarial subjects, in which case they would have been differently categorised. The assumption was also made that all of these people could have made a livelihood as secretaries had they chosen to do so. Consequently only tentative conclusions can be drawn from the figures.

Of these former secretaries, 31 per cent had occupations in category a) and so may have been promoted when they moved; 51 per cent were in category b), who retrained for a different occupation;

\* The possibility cannot be excluded that in some cases several secretaries referred to the same individual, thus exaggerating the apparent amount of mobility.



and 18 per cent were in category c), those who took other jobs requiring little or no further training.

The occupations most frequently taken up had been teacher (57 former secretaries), air hostess (49 former secretaries), nurse (36 former secretaries), then some way behind, personnel officer (nineteen), journalist (twelve), advertising executive (twelve), translator (eleven), manager (ten), model (ten), interviewer (nine), computer programmer (seven), social worker (seven) and librarian (seven).

The proportion who were presumed to have moved into another occupation as a result of their work as secretaries (31 per cent) is an important indication that there certainly have been, and probably still are, prospects for secretaries to advance in their careers. The areas in which this possible promotion took place suggests that there are more chances for promotion out of secretarial work in certain fields, namely publishing, advertising and personnel.

It is possible that the secretary's job could be considered as a 'bridging occupation'. 'Prospective bridging' is a term which describes those occupations 'in which the potentialities<sup>16</sup> for movement to another type of work are relatively great'.

The secretary's job, as shown by the numbers of people known to have moved into other occupations, would seem to be such a 'bridging occupation'. Secretaries who are employed in any field of activity can learn a considerable amount about the work involved which may enable them to enter other occupations (for example in publishing, advertising and personnel).



Over half of the former secretaries known to respondents had changed their occupation and presumably begun again from scratch (category b) since the occupations bore no obvious relation to their former work. This surely indicates that these women had tried secretarial work and rejected it. At least half of the occupations included in this category required a minimum of three years' training and so the motivation to change must have been fairly strong. Perhaps the secretaries felt that their prospects were not as good as they had been led to expect, or the reasons which prompted them to take up secretarial work in the first place no longer applied. Alternatively, they may not have found the work to be sufficiently interesting.

The pattern of subsequent occupations adopted were similar to those which the present sample of secretaries had thought about as alternative occupations (Chapter VI). They were also similar to those occupations named by secretaries who were working as such only as a second-best choice (Chapter VI). It is possible that many former secretaries, having tried working as secretaries, decided that it did not satisfy them and consequently made a considerable effort to revert to their first choice of occupation. One employer, who was personally concerned with the training of secretaries, felt that many women undertook a secretarial course as a means of delaying making a career decision; some former secretaries may have done this, finally coming to a career decision only after having tried the work to which the secretarial training led.

Occupations concerned with travel seemed to have been attractive to many former secretaries; sixty became air hostesses, travel agents or couriers (and five temporary au pairs). The attraction of travel had previously been revealed in the reasons why secretaries left their jobs (Chapter XII) as well as in possible alternative careers which they had considered (Chapter VI).

Movement occurs into secretarial work as well as out of it. Eighteen London secretaries in the present study had formerly been nurses, and seventeen teachers.

Another means of discovering what opportunities were open to secretaries was available. In Chapter II, it was explained that when members of IQPS and NAPS returned questionnaires, in the early stages of the present study, it was found that some had left secretarial work and taken up other occupations. Seventy-three of these former secretaries subsequently completed shortened questionnaires (Appendix 3). Over half of them were found to be working as teachers or lecturers in secretarial or commercial subjects; eight were school teachers and three students. The rest were in executive, management or supervisory jobs; others were employing shorthand or typing skills, although not as secretaries, but, for example, as court reporters.

They were asked why they had decided to leave secretarial work (Appendix 3, question no.32). Eight had been promoted to supervisory, managerial or executive office positions;

fourteen had been influenced by higher potential earnings elsewhere (although this was often only part of the reason given); more than half, however, had been dissatisfied with the intrinsic factors associated with their secretarial work. These included lack of responsibility, challenge and stimulation, or scope for initiative and decision-making, but were mainly because promotion prospects were poor. It was also felt that employers only wanted young secretaries; 'Just as "nobody loves a fairy when she's forty", the upper age limit for secretaries is too often thirty-five.' It was said that there was prejudice against women; that they could only progress in business by taking professional qualifications or degrees; and that the nature of the job limited promotion since it was tied to another person.

Other secretaries had changed careers for security:

'I had a fear of being rejected after reaching fifty or thereabouts', or because they felt that if a boss retired or received a 'golden handshake' they would be in an impossible situation; the increasing number of mergers was seen as an additional threat to their job security.

One former secretary said, 'I voted with my feet. It's a job which is all right for girls who want something only until they marry, but it soon becomes unsatisfactory to a "career woman"'. .

Six former secretaries were no longer prepared to work as an aide to another person and preferred to undertake work in which they had some independence. 'As a secretary I had to reflect and



project my boss's point of view and personality, and I would rather be the "king" than the "power behind the throne". Others remarked:

'I was fed up with being expected to pander to every whim of a disorganised male, and much preferred the teaching atmosphere.'

'A secretary works for someone (usually a man) and I couldn't stand some of the supercilious, patronizing attitudes of the men I worked for. Too many bosses still generalise, and think of all (or most) secretaries as "dolly birds" with little or no intelligence.'

Other reasons given for having left secretarial work included a desire for higher status, for flexibility in terms of hours and holidays, especially due to family and domestic commitments; or changing jobs when the opportunity arose because they had never really wanted to be secretaries in the first place.

The attraction of higher salaries elsewhere was realistic; the median salary of these former secretaries was approximately £500 p.a. more than of their secretary contemporaries in IQPS and NAPS, although this might have been partly an effect of their slightly higher age range.

An investigation was made into the problem posed by a boss's retirement, as it might affect promotion prospects (Appendix 1, question no.59). A secretary may have worked for an individual

for a considerable number of years and then be faced with his or her retirement. The problems involved are firstly that if the secretary has to change jobs she feels that employers on the whole are less willing to employ her if she is not young; secondly, in a new job she may have to accept a lower salary than she had achieved in her established job; thirdly, that the individual who succeeded the retired person, if he were replaced, may wish to bring along his own secretary rather than take over the incumbent; and fourthly, that she may lose status or seniority by changing jobs. The problem is an important one, for 20 per cent of London secretaries, 32 per cent of IQPS and 45 per cent of NAPS had worked for a boss who subsequently retired. Secretaries who had faced this situation were asked what had happened. The majority, well over half in each group, had become secretary to the boss's successor, while a few had found other jobs in the same organisation. Only a very small proportion had found jobs elsewhere, either before or after the boss had retired. This finding seems to demonstrate a responsible attitude on the part of employers, who possibly considered that the secretary was of importance in helping the successor to cope with the new job, or at the very least were acting kindly. Having a secretary who knows how the system works can be of much help to an executive in a new situation. The secretary does not lose status by working for another person of lower rank and acknowledges that part of her function is that of an assistant who enables an

individual to perform his or her job more effectively.

Promotion which is measured according to a boss's status, does not always work. For example, one employer who was visited saw secretarial succession as a great source of anxiety. The organisation, which was large, had attempted to create a career structure for its secretaries by making sure that they had all 'come up through the ranks'; consequently they all had a good deal of knowledge and experience of the company and its affairs, having worked in different sections and for increasingly higher-rank individuals. The secretary to the chief executive was due to retire and according to the firm's policy, the secretary to his deputy was next in line for the job. However, the chief executive had already made it quite clear to the personnel department that he would on no account accept her as his own secretary. Interpersonal problems of course exist in all business relationships, and many executives are no doubt 'passed over' in the same way; but this situation does point to one of the limitations to secretarial mobility within an organisational structure.

Similarly, several secretaries and employers maintained that if secretaries were good at their work, bosses were reluctant to give them promotion because they did not want to lose their services.

Since advancement possibilities for secretaries are completely dependent upon employers, employers' views on this matter were canvassed (Appendix 7, question no.8). They were asked whether



they considered that a secretary's job was a good beginning for women who wanted to make a career in the business world. Some of the employers themselves were not in business, but were for example in medical, legal or educational fields, where promotion possibilities for secretaries were limited because advancement was usually dependent upon professional qualifications. It was, however, apparently possible for secretaries in some law establishments to become managing clerks.

Views differed as to the relative advantages and disadvantages of using a secretary's job to gain access to the higher reaches of the business world, but more employers thought it was a good means to a business career (eighty-six employers) than thought it was not (fifty-nine employers). Twenty-seven employers were not prepared to say whether they felt they could recommend the secretary's job as a means of advancement; they thought it all depended on the secretary herself and her ambition or interest in the work, the firm and its attitudes or size, the willingness of the boss to communicate with the secretary, teach her the business and allow her responsibility, and the general employment opportunities.

Those employers who did see it as a positive means of advancement gave as their reasons, firstly, that it was a very useful training or learning situation and the information which could be acquired would be of great value in furthering a secretary's career.

Examples of their comments are:

'It is one of the few jobs which give them a good commercial understanding of what is happening around them.'

'It's probably one of the best beginnings possible, and what is more they start at a good salary.'

'It must be a good beginning, because it is useful to know how things work. They get to know how things function from the beginning - it's like a man being on the shop floor and becoming the Managing Director.'

'If my secretary were a career-minded girl it would be a cracking way for her to start because she is left to get on with it herself. She has to run the thing and only asks me certain things. But of course it all depends on the job and the girl ... We deal with all the paper work for the main company, so she can learn lots about, for example, starting a factory. It would certainly be an easy way in.' (textile company).

'It's a good training situation because they see the weakness of the people for whom they work and the chaotic manner in which many decisions are reached. There is a great wastage of girl-power through lack of management organisation.'

'It must be a good training because it allows a person to get an insight into the top executive's world, without the responsibility.'

'It's a good training if you have a good boss who is willing to teach you - that's the way I began' (woman executive).

'It's a very good beginning if they are determined to do interesting work. A secretarial job can be dull or interesting, but it is a very good place to begin. A good girl is worth

her weight in gold and then she is utilised more and depended upon and then she can move over. My secretary, for example, runs our training school entirely on her own.'

'I myself (man accountant) was a shorthand-typist - it was a part of general training then, and it taught me to write a good letter. If a girl is keen enough now she could do this if she was interested, and could even qualify.'

'Three Governors of the Bank of England started as shorthand-typists in the early days, and I know of people who have gone from court reporters to judges.'

A contrary view was also frequently expressed, namely that the secretary's job should not be considered as a stepping stone to other things but that it was an end in itself:

'As far as I am concerned, a secretary has an interesting life and good money. She meets people from all walks of life and that is sufficient in itself. There is a great deal of fulfilment in the job - mine meets millionaires and titled people - it's not just writing letters.'

'In larger firms, it is an end in itself. A secretary to a high-ranking boss can get involved in all sorts of interesting work.'

'A secretary's job is an end in itself. Many begin much lower down the scale and achieve the position of secretary. Not everyone can do it well.'

'It's not a good beginning, it's a good ending. Nothing is more important than to be a good secretary, although we do promote them to organisational and administrative positions.'

'In banking they get experience of banking first and then become secretaries, and that says a lot about them. It



is very statusful here, especially since we have three grades, senior secretary, principal secretary and executive secretary; it depends on the seniority of the people they work for. All our secretaries have come from within the bank.'

'I imagine that if one works up from being a secretary to a minor executive to become secretary to a chairman or managing director, that is a good career in itself, because their earnings increase and so does the importance of the work they have to do.'

This latter comment would be valid if it were not for the fact that it is possible to be a secretary to a chairman at a relatively early age, unless a career is thought to span only the years between school and marriage or childbearing. For instance, of the secretaries in central London who worked for chairmen, half were aged under twenty-five and three were only nineteen years old.

Several employers who thought the secretary's job a good way of furthering a career, did so on the grounds that the employment situations for women and men were different, and opportunities unequal. Sometimes their comments recognised the fact directly, while at other times it reflected what was obviously their view that there were certain jobs that were suitable for men and others which were suitable for women.

'With the situation as it exists at the moment, it is the ONLY beginning. A girl with a science degree has to

work as a secretary to a director of science in order to get on, because if she goes in as a scientist she will find herself doing all the dogsbody work. By going in as a secretary she will learn more from him in twelve months than by doing it herself.'

'Yes, it's the only beginning ... it's a role similar to marriage, a service role.'

'The way things are today, yes. Most women who have got somewhere have been secretaries. It's very wrong, but I can see how it happens.'

'Not in the City - that's a man's world.'

'A woman who intends to become a secretary and not a shorthand-typist can command a substantial salary and can make a good career within the field. But having said that, it is still a man's world.'

'For a man yes, but not for a woman.'

'It is a good beginning, but the trouble is that if they are good one doesn't want to promote them, they could only become more of a p.a. Perhaps it is not the ideal opening, but there is prejudice against women in the trade union altogether'(television company).

'I'm all for a good academic background and a good university education, but to get anywhere they have to be secretaries as well.'

Opportunities were limited, employers felt, in situations where advancement was dependent upon professional qualifications, where graduates were taken on for all executive positions, or where

the particular business was 'man's work'. The feeling was often expressed that there were more opportunities in fields other than their own, particularly in publishing, advertising and personnel; a similar belief was held by the secretaries and was indeed confirmed by employers in these particular fields.

'In publishing yes, but I don't know about other fields. It is certainly a way in. We have in fact in various departments former secretaries doing research work, as production assistants, editorial assistants and sub-editors.'

'If my secretary had worked for some time in advertising then no doubt she would become my p.a. and then possibly an executive and would go on from there. It's almost an ideal way of beginning, but of course her boss has to be interested in allowing her to develop in this way.'

'They can very often get on, especially in personnel work. My secretary is definitely potential for becoming an executive, although often they prefer to stay with a man than move on.'

The opposite view of opportunities in these fields was expressed by a woman personnel officer in an advertising agency.

'No, advertising makes one cynical. I would like to say yes, but there are very few openings for them in advertising - very few doors are open to them. The media seems to recruit only public relations and research posts for women and fringe activities farther up. However, even then, only female-based accounts would be dealt with by women, "make-up" for example.'



Among the employers who considered the secretary's job was not a good means by which a secretary could make a career in the business world, several felt that the job itself could be described as 'dead end'. 'A secretary is a secretary, is a secretary' said one. Other employers commented:

'Women just don't get on in the business world, but if you want to try, becoming a secretary is one of the worst ways to begin.'

'Generally it tends to be the top of the tree and it's very difficult to branch out from there. She would have to go into other specialised jobs if she wanted to get on. We promote female supervisors from clerks, but a secretary would not have the background knowledge that a clerk would have.'

'If a woman has 'A' levels or a degree there are other opportunities for them, and they should not try to be secretaries. I would think even if a girl was good, she would find it very difficult to break into another field, although it would be easy vice versa.'

'If she wants a career in business she should decide what she is going to do and then go into it. If she becomes a secretary she stays there unless she is very brilliant.'

'No, it's a very stereotyped job. The only future is to be in an organisation where the person who she is working for is promoted and then she will be promoted with him. But when you get to the top, you get to the door.'

'No! It is not a good beginning, especially for a graduate woman who wants an executive career in business. I am against graduate secretaries and I'm unpopular because of it. Most women in business have the same view. Each person has to find the way in that they like, but she will not make the grade if she comes in as a secretary. I think non-graduates who want to be secretaries can have a satisfying job and it might be a way in for the odd one, but only in a small business.' (woman executive).

In this respect, a survey of graduate secretaries found that, contrary to the impression given by advertisements, graduate secretarial work was less financially rewarding than occupations such as teaching, librarianship, accountancy or banking, where graduates entered at a higher level than non-graduates. Those secretaries who had become executives had had specialist skills, such as shorthand in a foreign language or data-processing knowledge, which put them apart from others.<sup>17</sup>

It was also stated by some employers that the secretary's job was not a good beginning because what she learned while on the job would not be of any value in other situations (although others had put the opposite view):

'I doubt whether working in an office and not going outside it is a training for learning a business. You would need to meet lots of people and attend courses. In this firm you could go to Head Office if you were very bright, where two of the divisional managers have more p.a. type jobs and secretaries travel around with them, but that's about all.'

'Most intelligent secretaries become involved and tend to want not to go on. They advance in terms of becoming secretaries to higher people, rather than using the situation as a springboard to becoming an executive themselves.'

A particular problem secretaries would have to face in taking other jobs was the changeover to one who has to give orders from being one who has received them:

'It is very difficult to transfer from a secretary grade to an executive grade, mainly because she has been accustomed to taking and not giving instructions, and it is not easy to change over.'

'If her sights are set high she must cease to be a "conduit pipe" and do it herself. She does have access to all kinds of information, but only a low level of initiation.'

'Once a secretary, always a secretary. I made one exception and tried it, and she had spent so many years doing what other people wanted that she could not think for herself.'

Other comments made by employers indicated that they felt women in general, and secretaries in particular, were not interested in making a career at all, but rather were doing this kind of work while they marked time before marriage or raising a family, which was their prime aim in life. The feeling was complemented by what employers took to be a temporary or uninterested approach to work, or one which was instrumental in that a secretary's job was treated as simply the means to earn a good salary for a short time:

'Basically the majority of women have as their main aim the need to get married. I feel 98 per cent of them are taking a job until then.'

'It's not a good beginning for a woman to get on in the business world, but it is a good chance for her to get off. They are only interested in the men they are working for. Most come to look for husbands and boyfriends. A



secretary could become a managing clerk if she was a bright girl, but most don't want to.'

'Women are so complex, most don't want to make a career at all.'

'The reason she isn't getting on is that she doesn't want to. You have to be a subservient type to be a secretary in the first place.'

'Most girls are in it for the money and not for the career.'

'My last secretary became a training officer elsewhere. There should be more of this but many secretaries don't want progression, although they say they do, and they are seldom prepared to do the necessary training involved.

They don't like it. Most are just waiting to get married.'

There was a general feeling that small organisations, where secretaries had varied work and more responsibility, gave the greatest opportunities for advancement, although in some large organisations, such as the Civil Service, where there was structured advancement, there were also chances for promotion. In the Civil Service advancement can take place along two lines, either through shorthand or typing to Personal Secretary and Senior Personal Secretary grades (a Personal Secretary is allocated on an individual basis to officials of not less than Assistant Secretary grade or equivalent, while a Senior Personal Secretary is allocated to either a Minister of the Crown or a civil servant of the rank of Deputy Secretary or above), or to clerical and executive positions and thence to higher executive positions. A Personal

Secretary can transfer to the executive line of advancement, if she is prepared to undertake the necessary training. Hence a secretary in the Civil Service can, in principle, choose which type of advancement she will adopt, that which is marked by the status of her boss or that which follows the normal pattern of advancement laid down in the Civil Service.

Examples of the non-promotability of secretaries compared to clerks were given by three employers. It was felt that a clerk could be promoted to a supervisory position, whereas a secretary advanced only according to the status of her boss:

'Here, some years ago, two women joined the personnel department as clerical assistants. One was pushed into taking up shorthand-typing and has left with a pension as a secretary. The other who did not, went on to be a Head Office manager at considerably more money than the other.'

'It was the only way to get one's foot in the door at one time. Now, if a girl wanted to get on she would come in on the clerical side and do bankers' exams. If she were not bright enough to do that, becoming a secretary would give her a useful career. I know two girls, one who came in as a secretary, the other on the clerical side, and the latter got on better because as shorthand-typing is so valuable their bosses don't want to give them up.'

Secretaries themselves, had different views about promotion, of which the following three are representative examples:

'Not knowing what to do, having had no reasonable advice at school apart from University, teaching or nursing, I thought a secretarial course would provide a "stepping stone" to other jobs. In the majority of cases this just doesn't work. One gets in a rut and apathy sets in. We are often regarded as being thick - the main problem is that one never does original, thought-provoking work, one only handles another's thoughts. It's all very frustrating.'

'Within this organisation, secretaries are graded according to their boss's status, and regarded as being permanently secretaries. I feel they are often every bit as valuable as other management and should be engaged and paid according to their ability. As a secretary I am very well paid, but it is agreed I have management capabilities and perform tasks normally undertaken by management. However, unless a suitable vacancy occurs, I can rise no higher in my present job because of job classification, etc. regardless of any extra management tasks I do.'

'Basically, whatever one calls oneself, if you are a secretary you are a typist. It never fails to amaze me how many girls just sit back and accept this. So far I have had two jobs; in the first I ended up as a negotiator for some surveyors, and now I am doing far more work concerned with contact lenses (her boss was an optician) than with typing. Maybe I have been lucky, but I can't help feeling the opportunities are there for all secretaries, they just don't seem to make the most of them. If I can do it, anybody can, I really am an awful secretary!'



Part of the problem for some secretaries seems to have been that they have not realised until too late that they had no prospects. It was too late because by the time they had attained the highest level of secretarial job, they were at an age where further training would involve considerably more effort, where entering a new field would involve accepting a reduced income initially, and where security assumed more importance.

The following comment and advice was given to secretaries in 1926, and much of it is still relevant today:

'There are, however, many stenographers and secretaries for whom the chief problem is to get into some other line of work. They erred in the first place by choosing this profession, but they would err still more by staying there once it became an irritation and a blind alley to them ...

Thus if you have made a mistake, do not foolishly cling to it. Your precious experience may be put to use elsewhere ...'

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If employers do not give greater promotion prospects to secretaries (and 58 per cent of secretaries had no such prospects) it is likely that the best will indeed leave secretarial work altogether. It has recently been said that 'some women secretaries and personal assistants are worthy of promotion. They have been closely associated with senior executives and have seen perhaps a wider segment of the company than men who have come up a different route. While a secretary may not be able to take over from her boss, she may well be capable of filling a post not too far below. Organizations should look closely at these women and not allow immediate convenience to block their aspirations of promotion. It would have a dramatic effect on the morale and efforts of women within organizations, if management would consider such women for

managerial posts.<sup>19</sup> This is advice which, if taken, might well benefit both employers and secretaries. Indeed, there is some indication that employers are realising that in order to attract and keep able secretaries, they have to offer more than increased pay. A recent advertisement illustrates this changing attitude.<sup>20</sup>

'Career opportunity for mature secretary. Serious, intelligent, highly efficient woman with usual secretarial skills wanted by small Bond Street architect's practice to take full responsibility for general administration. Salary negotiable, around £2,000 p.a. reviewed twice yearly, plus substantial profit sharing. Eventual partnership offered to suitable person.'

It has been shown that there are tangible advantages to be gained from the traditional mobility pattern for secretaries. By advancing in terms of employer-status, the secretary is likely to find she gains in terms of higher pay, higher status by association, greater responsibility and variety, and more job interest. Devaluation of the term 'secretary', which has arisen through shortage, has upset this traditional pattern. Many women are able to become secretaries in their first job, even secretary to an individual of high status, leaving them with no apparent prospects of promotion in traditional terms. The situation appears to have a further consequence. If educated and able women feel that the occupation has less status than formerly, and few career opportunities, they will cease to be attracted to secretarial work. It could be argued that it would be no bad thing if those who traditionally became secretaries in the past, that is, the educated, middle class girls, no longer did so.

This might restore the former situation where a woman usually had to gain experience in an organisation in a fairly junior capacity before she was considered as a secretary. At present, approximately 40 per cent of all girl school-leavers enter office work. The ones who take up shorthand and typing tend to be the most intelligent of their contemporaries<sup>21</sup> and many see the job<sup>22</sup> of secretary as an ideal peak of a career in office work.

If they became secretaries they would feel, and indeed most would have achieved, a considerable amount in terms of occupational mobility. The alternative is to provide real prospects of promotion for those women who use the secretary's job as a stepping stone to a rewarding career.



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## CHAPTER XIV

### SOCIAL CLASS, SOCIAL MOBILITY AND STATUS

An outline of the social class backgrounds of the secretaries studied was presented in Chapter IV, using the Registrar General's Classification of Occupations.<sup>1</sup> Although this classification has gained general acceptance, certain criticisms of it have been made, in particular the adoption of the term 'social class' to group together a variety of occupations. Rather than calling these groups 'social classes' they should more correctly be referred to as 'occupational categories'.<sup>2</sup> The Registrar General's classification of social classes is made on the basis that 'each category is homogeneous in relation to the basic criterion of the general standing within the community of the occupations concerned. This criterion is naturally correlated with, and the application of the criterion conditioned by, other factors such as education and economic environment, but it has no direct relationship to the average level of remuneration'.<sup>3</sup> In the present study the term 'social class' is used in the same way, that is, as an occupational category; it does not directly encompass other variables such as income, education and life style which are often associated with the allocation of an individual to a given social class.

To reiterate the findings in Chapter IV, 52 per cent of London secretaries had fathers with occupations in social classes I and II, 37 per cent in social classes II, with rather more in manual than non-manual occupations, and 6 per cent in social classes IV and V. The fact that most secretaries come from high social class backgrounds



may be related, partly at least, to the close relationship which<sup>4</sup> exists between language skills and social class.

#### Self-rated class

Secretaries were asked to which social class they felt they belonged, and were offered a range of alternative replies; upper, upper-middle, middle, lower-middle, working, or any other class (Appendix 1, question no.69).

A problem associated with the use of questions of this type is that the meaning and criteria which are given by each respondent to the different classificatory terms are not known.<sup>5</sup> Runciman maintained, however, that there was considerable congruence<sup>6</sup> between subjective and objective class ratings.<sup>7</sup> Dale found that most male clerks thought of themselves as 'lower-middle' class.<sup>8</sup> Lockwood, in reviewing research on self-rated social class, consistently found that the majority of office workers identified themselves as middle class, although a substantial proportion saw themselves as working class. The higher the grade of clerical job, the smaller were the proportions who saw themselves as working class. The proportion of secretaries in the present study who felt they were working class was lower than that found in every one of the studies of office workers reviewed by Lockwood. This was undoubtedly a consequence of their higher social class origins.

Table XIV.1 shows how secretaries in all three groups placed themselves in terms of social class.

Table XIV.1                      Self-rated social class

	LONDON (n=515) %	IQPS (n=170) %	NAPS (n=73) %
Upper	3	1	-
Upper-middle	15 )	10 )	10 )
	)	)	)
Middle	43 ) 68	37 ) 65	63 ) 83
	)	)	)
Lower-middle	10 )	18 )	10 )
Working	14	14	10
Other class	2	-	-
Don't know or not stated	13	20	7
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

In the London sample and IQPS approximately two thirds thought of themselves as middle class (whether upper, middle or lower, 83 per cent of NAPS members placing themselves in these categories. The difference between NAPS and the other two groups may be accounted for by the higher proportion of the London sample and IQPS who did not complete the question.

Ten London secretaries objected to the question, saying, for instance, 'I am not class-conscious'. Mary Warnock has suggested that the word 'class' is at an embarrassing stage of its development, for, like the word 'duty' it has been used in the past to describe a well-defined set of attitudes; changing values have however altered the meaning of such words. If the Registrar General began to call 'social classes' by a different name, such as 'occupational categories', it might discourage the use of the word 'class' which to some secretaries, and to other people, seems to have pejorative overtones.

No difference was found in self-rated social class between the different age groups.

Table XIV.2 shows how London secretaries with fathers in occupations rated according to the Registrar General's classification, rated their own social class position.

Table XIV.2      Self-rated social class and father's occupation  
                      (London secretaries)

	Father's social class (Registrar General)									
	I (n=62)		II (n=185)		III <sub>nm</sub> (n=78)		III <sub>m</sub> (n=97)		IV and V (n=28)	
Self-rated class:	%		%		%		%		%	
Upper	2		6		-		1		-	
Upper-middle	29 )		23 )		8 )		6 )		(7) )	
	)		)		)		)		)	
Middle	50 ) 87		48 ) 79		53 ) 82		39 ) 56		(36) ) 54	
	)		)		)		)		)	
Lower-middle	8 )		8 )		21 )		11 )		(11) )	
	)		)		)		)		)	
Working	3		6		10		32		(43)	
Other, don't know, not given	8		9		8		11		(3)	
	<u>8</u>		<u>9</u>		<u>8</u>		<u>11</u>		<u>(3)</u>	
	100		100		100		100		(100)	

(Percentages are shown in brackets where numbers are small)

In view of the small numbers whose fathers were in social classes IV and V, interpretations of the figures must be guarded, nevertheless it is of some interest that over half of those with fathers in social class IV and V occupations thought of themselves as middle class. The proportion considering themselves to be working class increased considerably between social class I and social classes IV and V, and this increase was highly statistically significant ( $\chi^2$ , 4 d.f. = 60.15,  $P < 0.001$ ).



An interesting difference in self-assessment lies between the manual and non-manual occupations in the Registrar General's social class III. Nearly a third of secretaries whose fathers were in social class III manual occupations thought of themselves as working class, compared with a tenth of secretaries whose fathers were in social class III non-manual occupations, although well over half the secretaries with fathers in social class III manual occupations also thought of themselves as middle class. This finding supports the long-held view that the manual and non-manual dichotomy constitutes a critical divide in class identification, although in the case of these secretaries it appears more as a trend than a split. It may be that the class self-identification of some secretaries with fathers in manual occupations has been modified by the environment in which they work, or that their backgrounds did not encourage them to think of themselves as working class in the first place. One secretary in this group said, for instance, 'Although my father was what might be called working class, he was an educated man and could always help me with my Latin, French, maths and science homework.' A greater proportion of secretaries whose fathers had social class III non-manual occupations, than any other group, thought of themselves as 'lower-middle class', although the distribution just failed to reach statistical significance.

Mothers' jobs did not seem to influence their daughters' class identification (mothers' jobs were generally at a lower social class level than their husbands' jobs). It is likely, therefore, that class identification is related primarily to the father's occupation rather than to the mother's, although it has been pointed out that a mother's education may have as much influence

as a father's on such matters as children's attainment. <sup>11</sup>

### Social Mobility

It has been seen that in terms of occupational mobility a secretary's job may be the peak of her career, the central point in a career leading to more responsible work, or the initial stepping-off point to managerial or other work. Occupational mobility describes the movement that is made by a single individual within an occupational hierarchy, while social mobility traces the difference in occupation between parents and children. Social mobility has consequently been described as 'intergenerational occupational change'. <sup>12</sup> Social and occupational mobility are obviously linked, because a change in an individual's occupation may be reflected in that individual's social mobility. For example, if a secretary from a social class III background became a manager (social class II) her classification in terms of both occupational and social mobility will have changed.

Social mobility is also linked to status since it describes 'the extent of movement in social status or social position by individuals of diverse social origins. Such a study assumes a hierarchy of social status - that society is arranged in a series of layers - and that there are criteria which may be used to indicate the status level, or position in the hierarchy, of an individual or a group.' <sup>13</sup>

The social mobility of women has not received the same attention as has the study of social mobility of men. In the classic investigation of social mobility in Britain, edited by Glass, <sup>14</sup>



it was stated that the study of intergenerational changes in status was limited to men 'because a prestige scale for women's occupations would not be directly comparable. . In our society, in which women have relatively little opportunity to take up occupations of high social status, and where, in any case, most married women give up paid work after the birth of their first child, the occupations held by women tend to be of lower status than those which men of comparable background and education would be willing to accept.'

15

This viewpoint is supported by Viola Klein who said that the "levelling-down" ... of the daughters of the middle and upper classes is the result of a widespread attitude among girls who regard their gainful employment as a temporary phase and do not expect their future to depend on it. It therefore matters to them much less than to men how they earn their living or their pocket money.'

Saying, as Glass and Hall did, that men's and women's occupations are not directly comparable in studies of social mobility, seems to involve a willingness to take into consideration the different motivation for a woman adopting an occupation (because it is not a primary source of income, or is only temporary, or would be interrupted). A comparison of fathers' and daughters' occupations and fathers' and sons' occupations may produce different findings but does not necessarily mean that they cannot be validly compared.

16

Research undertaken in the United States by DeJong et al. found, contrary to their theoretical expectations, that a comparative study



of mobility patterns showed no difference in mobility between men and women. 'The extent of role conflict for females between family and occupational roles may be exaggerated, or may have changed more rapidly than theorists have contended. It is also possible that there is a hitherto unsuspected resolution of these functional role impediments to mobility once the female makes the choice to work ... The barriers to both upward and downward mobility between white and blue-collar occupations for males and females may indicate that having a father in a blue-collar occupation may be more of a handicap to occupational mobility than being a female.' Hence, using women's different motivations for adopting a particular occupation as a reason to exclude them from mobility studies is not justified. Women do, after all, choose their occupations, even though they may regard them in a different light from men. A woman's occupation may be as important to her, as to a man, in determining her social position and her life style.

17

It has been stated by Bechhofer in regard to the classification of occupations: 'A singularly intractable problem is the placing of women and men on a single occupational status scale ... It has been argued that non-manual clerical work is performed by many 'working class' girls and that it is unreasonable to place them on a par with male clerical workers who would generally be called 'middle class'. This view seems to be unreasonable, for why should not women be deemed 'middle class' in terms of their occupation in the same way as men? If occupation alone is an insufficient measure of social class, which is what the argument suggests, then it should not be used in relation to men either. Bechhofer

goes on to say, 'If due account is taken of level in the hierarchy this argument is less convincing. In so far as women in jobs of this kind are in contact in the work situation with 'white collar' worlds, the influence on them is likely to be considerable. If they are married women, then their placing will in any case normally depend heavily on their husbands. If on the other hand they are single women, then the job, assuming they are away from home and form a household of their own, is likely to be of considerable importance as a source of contacts and normative orientation.' It might be added that even for married women, other considerations such as the status or nature of the job itself may be of more personal importance than the status she may derive from her husband's position. As more women choose to work, and as marriage roles fuse, a woman's occupation, rather than that of her husband or father, will increasingly tend to determine her own life chances and status.

The social mobility of secretaries has been investigated in the present study in two ways: firstly by employing the same criterion as that used for men, namely occupation, and secondly, through marriage.

18

Lockwood maintained that for men, clerical work has always been the main form of upward social mobility from the working class. For secretaries, however, this is not the case. It has been seen from Chapter I that the first women who worked in offices were from higher social classes than their male counterparts, and from this



Chapter, that the majority of secretaries today have fathers who are in social classes I and II, the same applying to older as to younger secretaries. <sup>19</sup> Lockwood described the occupations of fathers of female clerks, and although he used categories different to those used by the Registrar-General, a rough comparison seems to indicate that 30 per cent were from social classes I and II, 25 per cent from social class III and 45 per cent from social classes IV and V. Consequently secretaries have been, and still seem to be, drawn from a higher social class background than are other female clerical workers.

The secretary's job, according to the Registrar General, is classified as social class III, non-manual. Comparing this with the present or last occupations of the fathers of the London sample of secretaries in the present study, 51 per cent of secretaries were found to have been downwardly mobile, 6 per cent upwardly mobile, while 35 per cent remained in the same social class category as their father. <sup>20</sup> Mukherjee, in the Glass study of social mobility found a high degree of self-recruitment in occupations classified as I and II, that is, basically professional and managerial occupations. So whereas the sons of men in social classes I and II would tend to remain in the same categories as their fathers, the daughters of such men are more likely to be secretaries, and hence <sup>21</sup> be classified as social class III. As Virginia Woolf put it, "The sex distinction seems ... possessed of a curious leaden quality, liable to keep any name to which it is fastened circling in the lower <sup>22</sup> spheres." Mukherjee also reported that a third of sons had



remained in the same category as their fathers (compared with a similar 35 per cent of secretaries); of the two-thirds who had changed status, 36 per cent were upwardly mobile and 64 per cent downwardly mobile. Among mobile secretaries, 11 per cent had moved upwards, compared with 89 per cent who had moved downwards.

When the secretary's job was compared with her mother's occupation, a quite different picture emerged. Of those who had mothers who had worked at some time, 59 per cent of secretaries were in the same category as their mothers, 25 per cent were downwardly mobile and 16 per cent upwardly mobile. Taking separately those who were mobile (n=138), 38 per cent were upwardly and 62 per cent downwardly mobile (Table XIV.3).

Table XIV.3      Secretaries' jobs compared with their fathers', their mothers', and with the Glass study of sons and fathers

	Secretary compared with father's occupation	Secretary compared with mother's occupation	Glass study: Sons compared with fathers
A. <u>All secretaries</u> (London sample)			
Percentage of respondents remaining in the same occupational category as parents, i.e. not occupationally mobile	35	59	33
-----			
B. <u>Mobile secretaries</u>			
Percentage upwardly mobile	11	38	36
Percentage downwardly mobile	89	62	64

It can be seen from Table XIV.3 that the amount of occupational stability between fathers and sons as reported by Mukherjee is very similar

to that between secretaries and their fathers. When those secretaries who were mobile are separated out, a close similarity in the pattern between fathers and sons and mothers and daughters can be observed, while there is a wide discrepancy between fathers and daughters.

Secretaries are not of course representative of women generally, and these findings therefore represent only the movement of a small selective group, most of whom are from social classes I, II and III. It does appear, however, that there was considerably less upward mobility for daughters than for sons, compared with their fathers. It is a source of regret that secretaries were not asked the occupations of their brothers so that occupations of offspring of the same parents could be directly compared.

Considerably more secretaries (59 per cent) seemed to be at the same occupational level as their mothers. This may be because mothers who had been clerical workers encouraged or influenced their daughters in adopting secretarial work, as was suggested in Chapter VI.

In the introduction to this investigation it was stated that one aim of the research was to examine the hypothesis that the secretary's job is important in terms of upward occupational and social mobility for women. In Chapter XIII it was shown that in terms of occupational mobility, that is, movement within the individual's career, the secretary's job has an important place. The above findings, which compare the occupations of fathers and daughters, are inconsistent with the hypothesis that a secretary's

job as measured by occupation is a means of upward social (that is, intergenerational) mobility for women. Not only are most secretaries downwardly mobile compared with their fathers, they also tend to be downwardly mobile compared with their mothers (bearing in mind that the majority of secretaries were at the same level of occupation as their mothers). It should be pointed out, however, that most of the London secretaries were young and hence at an early stage in their careers; their fathers were necessarily a generation ahead. The secretaries may attain higher positions later in their careers. In addition, their mothers may have worked only before their marriage or childbirth, hence their mothers' jobs might have been held at a similar stage in their careers as their secretary daughters were at in the present study, and this could be the key to the similarities between them.

Another point to be borne in mind is that the movement from manual to non-manual work is in itself sometimes considered to be a form of upward mobility; 25 per cent of secretaries had fathers who were in manual occupations, so judged by this criterion alone, these secretaries would all be upwardly mobile.

If the secretary's job is not in itself a means of upward social mobility, measured by the classification of the occupation, are secretaries able to gain upward social mobility through marriage? It has been reported that women generally tend to 'marry up' while men tend to 'marry down'.<sup>23</sup>

When married secretaries' jobs were compared with their husbands', it was found that 41 per cent of husbands had occupations



in the same category as their secretary wives, while 53 per cent were in a higher and 5 per cent in a lower category. This may be a reflection not only of the tendency for secretaries to be in a level of job which was lower than if they had been born male, but also differences in education. <sup>24</sup> Pahl in a study of managers and their wives, reported that the wives had received considerably less education than their husbands. Managers' wives were principally secretaries and typists, or teachers, nurses or social workers. While thirty-four husbands in that study who were managers had a degree, only five of their wives had.

The occupations of fathers and husbands of London secretaries were compared. The distribution was very similar despite the generational difference (Table XIV.4).

Table XIV.4 Social class of fathers and husbands

Social class of husbands (n=179)		Social class of fathers (n=515)	
I and II	53%	I and II	52%
III	41%	III	37%
IV and V	5%	IV and V	6%
Not known	1%	Not known	5%
	<u>100%</u>		<u>100%</u>

The greatest proportion of secretaries were married to men in social class II, just as the greatest proportion had fathers in that category.

Table XIV.5 shows that the greatest proportion in each social class category married men at the same level, except for those

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Although the greatest number of husbands of London secretaries had occupations classified as social class II, the single individual occupation undertaken by the greatest number of husbands was 'clerks and cashiers' (twenty-seven, 15 per cent of all husbands). This had also been the single occupation most frequently undertaken by fathers (forty-seven, 9 per cent of all fathers) and by mothers (one hundred and twenty-nine, 25 per cent of all mothers and 39 per cent of all mothers who worked).

Women who were engaged to be married were asked about the jobs held by their fiancés. Sixty-two London secretaries were engaged to be married, all under thirty-five years of age and most under twenty-five, hence most of their fiancés can be assumed to be at early stages in their careers. It is interesting to note that the proportion of fiancés who had occupations in social classes I and II (60 per cent) was higher than that either for husbands or fathers (53 and 52 per cent respectively), although the difference was not statistically significant. Of those who were mobile in terms of prospective husband's job (thirty-five secretaries), approximately three-quarters were upwardly and one quarter downwardly mobile.

Single secretaries who would like to marry were asked what job they would ideally like a future husband to have. It was hoped that some indication might be obtained of whether a secretary ideally anticipated marrying a person who was of the same background as herself, or not. The question was open-ended in form and most of the replies were not easily classifiable. Where a specific job was named, all except three were in social classes I and II, the majority in social class I. The most favoured groups were architects, followed by farmers and doctors. In



fantasy terms at least, 50 per cent would wish to be upwardly mobile and only 6 per cent downwardly mobile.

However, the majority of single secretaries replied in more general terms. Fifteen expressed their preference by stating the area of work in which they would like a future husband to be involved, for example advertising, business or teaching. Forty-six emphasised the status of the occupation, for instance 'a professional' or 'an executive'; forty-nine expressed their hopes in terms of the intrinsic nature of the job, that it should be interesting for him, or that he should be happy in it. Fifteen did not care, or felt they were too old for the question to be relevant, some protesting that they married a man and not his job, obviously paying little heed to their chances for social mobility!

The possibility was examined that working as a secretary might enable women to locate husbands with high-status occupations. Two employers in the present study had actually been asked by job applicants what the marriage prospects in their company were.

<sup>25</sup>  
An American study of nurses found that they were more likely to marry men of a higher social status because their occupation gave them more access to such men, compared with their contemporaries who had entered other occupations. Married secretaries in the London sample were asked whether they had met their husbands at work (Appendix 1, question no.86) and twenty-two (12 per cent) said they had. Half of the husbands met at work (eleven) were from social classes I and II, eight from social class III non-manual, one from social class III manual and one from social class V. As might have been expected, most of the husbands were in non-manual occupations. The majority of these secretaries had married men

in the same occupational category as their fathers (nine), while a similar number were upwardly mobile (seven) as were downwardly mobile (six). Although half of these secretaries found husbands at work who were of the same occupational level as their fathers, the proportion was no higher than among those who had met their husbands outside the work situation. This does not support the hypothesis that the workplace is a major source of social mobility for women through marriage.

There is a considerable mythology about the boss/secretary relationship and marriage, which will be discussed in Chapter XV. Bosses themselves are not, however, an obvious source of marriage partners, since 90 per cent of them are already married (Appendix 1, question no.84).

The above findings indicate that secretaries, on balance, do not achieve upward social mobility by virtue of their job. Measuring mobility according to the Registrar General's classification, the majority of secretaries are downwardly mobile when their job is compared with their father's. In terms of social mobility through marriage, the greatest proportion married men whose occupation was at the same level as the secretary's father. The work situation did not provide an important means of upward social mobility through access to men of high status.

It should perhaps be added that the conclusions drawn from this study of occupational and social mobility are dependent upon the classification of the secretary's job by the Registrar



General. If the more responsible secretarial jobs, those which would be covered by the suggested title 'managing secretary' (Chapter X), were reclassified as social class II, then a very different picture would emerge.

### Status

In order to discover whether the Registrar General's classification of their occupation coincided with secretaries' own views of its status, they were asked to compare their own occupation with a selection of other occupations by saying whether they thought it was above, below or equal in status (Appendix 1, question no. 72). The occupations used for comparison were teacher, clerk, waitress, florist, accountant, housewife, office cleaner, nurse and shop assistant, presented in that order. The list was selected so that at least one occupation in each of the Registrar General's five social classes was represented. At the same time all of the occupations, with the exception of accountant, are predominantly filled by women, and so provide a realistic comparison. Had occupations which are mainly filled by men been used, then attitudes about women's relationship to men might have affected the replies. 'Accountant' was chosen as the occupation to represent social class I since this profession was the one with which secretaries were judged most likely to have come into contact at work.

'Housewife' is, of course, not reckoned as an occupation in the same light as are the others given in the list; it was included in order to see what a group of working women considered



the relative status of a housewife to be. No explanation was given to respondents for the inclusion of this category, and therefore the basis on which they gave replies is not known. Many women today consider that the occupation of housewife is as much a job of work as any other occupation, despite the official view that 'Females engaged on unpaid domestic duties even though previously employed are treated as economically inactive'.<sup>26</sup> Housewives are one of the most potent forces in the economy in terms of their purchasing power, not to mention their social responsibility and hours of work, but it is only in terms of their earning power that they are given an employment status in official statistics.

The social class category given by the Registrar General to each of the occupations used for comparison is as follows:

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Social class</u>
Accountant	I
Teacher	II
Nurse	II
Clerk	III - non manual
(Secretary	III - non manual)
Shop assistant	III - non manual
Florist	III - manual
Waitress	IV non-manual
Office cleaner	V

According to the Registrar General, therefore, the secretary's job is above those of waitress, office cleaner; is equal to clerk, shop assistant, florist; and is below accountant, teacher, nurse.

Secretaries' assessment of relative status can be seen in Table XIV.6; once more it should be stated that the criteria upon which these judgments were made are not known, despite the fact that the form of the question emphasised status irrespective of salary. Eight secretaries filled in all the categories as 'equal' and these have been excluded from the calculations. In addition, approximately 10 per cent of respondents felt they could not answer the question. The replies given concerning the relative status of each occupation, compared with that of secretary, are discussed below.

#### 1. Accountant

Although between 66 and 76 per cent of secretaries in the three groups classified the accountant's job as above the secretary's in status, between 12 and 16 per cent felt that the accountant's job was equal to their own. It would appear that it does not have an unambivalently high status. Perhaps the contact that secretaries are likely to have with a company accountant is not as impressive as contact with other professionals such as a doctor or solicitor, where the 'social distance' is greater. On the other hand some clerical workers call themselves 'accountant' if they work in a finance office, hence there may have been some confusion in the title. The occupation itself has different categories of membership such as chartered accountant and cost or works accountant involving different training and skills. In retrospect, therefore, the selection of accountant to represent social class I occupations was not a good choice, without the use of the term 'professional' as a prefix.

Table XIV.6

Status of the secretary's job compared with other occupations

The secretary's job is .....	LONDON (n=515)					IQPS (n=170)					NAPS (n=73)				
	Above	Equal	Below	Don't know		Above	Equal	Below	Don't know		Above	Equal	Below	Don't know	
	%	%	%	%		%	%	%	%		%	%	%	%	
1. Accountant	3	14	72	11		2	12	76	10		5	16	66	13	
2. Teacher	6	33	51	10		5	55	33	7		1	59	33	7	
3. Nurse	11	38	38	13		12	62	16	10		16	47	23	14	
4. Clerk	76	12	1	11		79	10	2	9		81	8	4	7	
5. Shop assistant	84	4	2	10		88	2	2	8		85	4	3	8	
6. Florist	70	18	1	11		71	16	2	11		64	21	1	14	
7. Waitress	86	2	2	10		88	1	2	9		89	-	3	8	
8. Office cleaner	86	2	3	9		86	1	2	11		88	-	3	9	
9. Housewife	41	37	6	16		41	37	2	20		40	36	3	21	



## 2. Teacher

Approximately half of the London secretaries felt that the teacher's job was higher in status than their own, while a third considered that it was equal. In IQPS and NAPS, however, over a half considered that their own job was equal in status to the teacher's. By comparison, Dale<sup>28</sup> found that approximately 80 per cent of men clerks rated their status below that of a teacher. Teaching requires three years' training, although the educational level required at entry for some teachers does not exceed that held by many secretaries. Secretaries can certainly earn as much as teachers, and their earning potential, if they intend to make a career as a secretary, may be as high if not higher. Average salaries for women teachers in 1970 ranged between £1,291 - £1,953 p.a. for graduates in primary schools, depending on their age, and between £1,058 and £1,776 for non-graduates in primary schools. In secondary schools the range was £1,324 - £2312 for graduates and £1,090 - £1,884 for non-graduates, again depending on age. Hence the salaries of secretaries are not essentially dissimilar from those of teachers, bearing in mind that the secretaries were predominantly in their twenties.<sup>29</sup> Senior secretaries carry out many responsible duties and so their assessment as equal to teachers may not be unreasonable on the criteria both of earnings and responsibilities. However, training is longer, and responsibility to the community at large is generally judged to be greater in the case of teachers.

## 3. Nurse

The status of a nurse is considered by secretaries to be lower, in relation to the secretary's job, than that of a teacher. More

respondents considered that the secretary's job was above that of a nurse, than had considered the secretary's job was above that of teacher, while 38 per cent of London secretaries, 62 per cent of IQPS and 47 per cent of NAPS felt that it was equal in status. This is surprising because matters of health are generally valued as highly important in the community, especially since the social cost of an error made on the part of a nurse can result in a matter of life or death, whereas an error committed by a secretary does not have such momentous repercussions. A nurse's training is longer and the responsibility in terms of human considerations greater. It may be that the status of a nurse is considered by many to be equal to or lower than a secretary's partly on the basis of the pay they receive. Comparisons of pay scales between secretaries and nurses is hard to establish because scales for nurses are dependent on a number of variables such as age, the stage in their career, and the hospital or specialty in which they work. In 1970 pay ranged from, at the lowest £525 p.a. for a student nurse at eighteen years of age to £2,844 at the highest for senior nursing staff in general hospitals.<sup>30</sup> It may also be that a nurse's job has domestic connotations which may reflect adversely upon its status. It is quite likely, however, that the status comparisons between a secretary, a teacher and a nurse are based upon social class backgrounds.

The social class background of secretaries in central London was higher than that reported in two studies of nurses and teachers. A study carried out among nurses in South-East England showed that 37 per cent were from social classes I and II, compared with 52 per cent of secretaries, 60 per cent were from social class III compared with 37 per cent of secretaries.<sup>31</sup> Direct comparison with teachers is more difficult to establish, but Floud and Scott<sup>32</sup>



in 1955 reported that 11 per cent of women teachers were from 'professional and administrative' backgrounds, 54 per cent from 'intermediate' and 35 per cent from manual backgrounds.

These differences may reflect the particular employment situation in central London which possibly attracts secretaries from higher social class backgrounds, although members of IQPS and NAPS, most of whom lived outside London, were from the same high backgrounds as the London sample of secretaries. A comparison with nurses in London teaching hospitals or teachers in grammar schools, would possibly show a different result.

#### 4. Clerk

This is an occupation which the Registrar General links together with shorthand writer, typist and secretary. More than three quarters of secretaries considered that their status was higher than the clerk's while 12 per cent of London secretaries, and 10 per cent and 8 per cent of IQPS and NAPS respectively thought they were equal in status.

#### 5. Shop assistant

Although officially in the same category as secretaries, more than 80 per cent of all three groups of secretaries considered their status to be higher than that of shop assistants.

#### 6. Florist

Among London secretaries 18 per cent considered themselves to be equal in status to florists, presumably based on the skill involved in the job, which may be considered as a 'craft', although the majority of secretaries in all three groups felt they had a higher status than florists.



## 7, 8. Waitress and Office cleaner

The responses for both these occupations are so similar that they can be treated together; almost everyone felt the secretary's job was higher in status than these two occupations.

### Housewife.

Some secretaries did not complete this category since they felt that the housewife's job was not strictly comparable with the rest. The response of secretaries in all three groups was consistent; approximately 40 per cent considered the secretary's job to be of a higher status than that of housewife, while 37 per cent of the London sample and IQPS and 36 per cent of NAPS felt it was equal in status. That approximately 40 per cent considered the housewife's status lower than that of a secretary may play some part in encouraging women to return to secretarial work. Status is not generally mentioned as a motivating factor prompting women to work. Many housewives do feel, however, that their work is not acknowledged as having any value because it is not paid, and this may mean that they consider their status to be low. The same attitude may have prompted many secretaries to judge the job of housewife as being lower in status than their own. Alternatively, the nature of the housewife's job may have influenced their replies.

From these responses it can be seen that many secretaries feel their occupation has a higher status than is accorded it by the Registrar General. Their earnings are likely to be as high as, and indeed may well be higher than those of teachers and nurses,

although it is arguable whether their social responsibilities are equivalent. Their social class backgrounds are probably similar. Whether a higher rating would be justified depends upon the actual job which a secretary performs. If she is undertaking a considerable amount of delegated or administrative work, she is doing a job which is on the same level as, say a junior manager, and that job is ranked as equivalent in status to a teacher or nurse. There is also the fact that secretaries mix with people who are of a high social status, and in some way they derive personal status from this contact, not only in their own eyes but in the eyes of others.

The Registrar General states that his groupings attempt to place together those with social, cultural, recreational and behavioural similarities.<sup>33</sup> In this respect it is likely that secretaries have more in common with teachers and nurses, than with clerks. Without a separate study of these factors in order to make direct comparisons, it is not possible to state categorically whether secretaries deserve to be in a different occupational category to clerks, shorthand writers or typists. Most secretaries have started work in more junior capacities and many are now undertaking tasks which involve considerably more knowledge, skill and responsibility than was needed in their earlier jobs. The Registrar General might consider reclassifying some secretaries, perhaps under the term 'qualified secretary' or 'managing secretary' to social class II, particularly if they have passed an examination such as the Private Secretary's Diploma or its equivalent. The socio-economic group to which secretaries belong is described by



the Registrar General as 'Employees, not exercising general planning or supervisory powers engaged in non-manual occupations ancillary to the professions but not normally requiring qualifications of university degree standard'.<sup>34</sup> The job of a senior secretary certainly does involve general planning and supervisory powers, as can be ascertained from their job descriptions, although the relative lack of personal responsibility may be considered a limiting factor.

Historically, secretaries have formed an elite among clerical workers. The fact that the secretary's job has been seen as the top of an employment ladder, as described in Chapter XIII, is evidence of its relatively high status. Such a position has been based partly but not entirely upon the close association with high status employers, in which the confidential nature of the work involved has no doubt played a part. The social class origins of the secretaries themselves, however, has helped to emphasise their higher status.<sup>35</sup> Lockwood asserted that association with people of high status produced an associated high status in those who have dealings with them. Indeed, most people who have a chance meeting with an eminent person will feel interested and excited by that contact, and may tell their family or friends about it. Working with such an individual, and getting to know him or her personally, can therefore be a rewarding experience for a secretary, inasmuch as she is able to mix with people who ordinarily would not be within her relational sphere, and this association is reflected in terms of status both within and outside an organisation.



Furthermore the secretary can choose the area of interest in which she expects to find the kind of person who is attractive to her in terms of her own interests. For instance, she may be able to work in medicine, or education, without having to go through the training that would be necessary to work in the same field as, say, a doctor or a teacher.

Although women office workers have generally been paid less than men office workers, secretaries' earnings have been high in relation to other women clerical employees, so that where status is felt to be related to income, their prestige has been high on this count as well.

Both employers and secretaries expressed the belief that the status of the occupation of secretary had fallen. They tended to blame this on two main changes which they had observed. Firstly, there was less differentiation between those who were called secretaries and other clerical workers, so the status of 'real' secretaries had fallen; secondly, it was said that standards of work were lower now than in the past. There may, however, be other factors which have contributed towards these described changes in status, some of which have been mentioned in previous chapters.

In the first place, most secretaries are women. In the nineteenth century, when women first worked in offices, contemporary journals and books rarely mentioned secretarial work as a suitable occupation for women, but emphasised clerkships, typewriting and shorthand as fields which were appropriate for them. By the

1920s, however, aided by the First World War, the secretary's job had become established as an occupation to which women might aspire. Increasingly, as women took over the greater proportion of office jobs from men, so a greater proportion of women became secretaries. The takeover was more complete in the secretarial field than in other clerical occupation, possibly because the work was particularly suitable in terms of the different roles assigned to men and women (Chapter XV).

It has been found that as women enter an occupation, so the status of that occupation falls. Lockwood has pointed out that even before women were employed regularly as clerks, this type of work already carried the stigma of being 'unmasculine': 'The influx of women merely strengthened the popular stereotype of the clerk and further detracted from the prestige of the occupation. The effect of a high proportion of women in an occupation on the social status of that occupation is a function of the general status of women in society.' Similarly, Prather described how, in the United States, the feminisation of the bank teller's job has resulted in a severe loss of status for the whole occupation.

Secondly, the earlier age of marriage and childbearing and an increase in the actual numbers who marry has affected the numbers of women who are available to become secretaries. The number of marriages increased from 291,000 in 1901 to 452,000 in 1968. This represents an increase of 55 per cent at a time when the population grew by only 44 per cent. The average age of unmarried women fell from 25.6 years in 1901 to 22.7 years in 1968. The careers in employment of many secretaries are limited to the few



years between leaving school or training institution and the birth of their first child, giving them no real chance to gain experience and knowledge. This in turn has reduced employers' expectations of the whole group, reflecting adversely upon those who wished to make the secretary's job a long term career.

Thirdly, girls are able to become 'secretaries' in their first jobs, owing to the demand for secretarial services exceeding supply. Although by no means all women start a secretarial career as a 'secretary', the fact that a proportion of girls are able to call themselves by the same title as more experienced employees has brought down the status of the occupation as a whole.

Fourthly, there has been a tendency, with the growth of large organisations, for executives to be allotted a personal secretary, irrespective of his or her needs. (In Chapter VIII it was shown that 70 per cent of secretaries worked for one person only). Competition in the organisational hierarchy demanded the confirmation of the executive's status within it. As one employer said, 'Any Tom, Dick or Harry has a secretary nowadays, because it enhances his status.' A secretary similarly wrote: 'In most large firms secretaries are employed as a status symbol rather than providing a necessary service. Every man of importance has to have his secretary, no matter how much or little work he may have for her. Consequently every typist is called secretary and not given enough responsibility which should go with the job. Many executives prefer to pass on simple administrative matters to their deputies rather than to their secretaries. This results in girls getting bored and discouraged.'



In a circular fashion, if secretarial work has acquired the reputation of being boring and undemanding, the more intelligent women will no longer be attracted to it. The comment of one secretary supports this view: 'I feel many girls become secretaries because they can't think of anything else to do and I feel this lowers the status of the job. The Grammar school I attended until I was eighteen was very anti secretarial work and girls were not encouraged to take secretarial courses unless they failed in every other channel.' If it is only the failures who are encouraged to become secretaries, or those who can think of nothing else to do, then standards are likely to fall.

These changes, which have contributed towards a reduction in a secretary's status, are responsible also for the observed lowering of standards. A secretary described graphically how the standard of secretaries at her place of work has fallen and how readily employers seemed to tolerate the situation:

'The atmosphere in which I work has to be experienced to be believed and I probably sound bitter and prejudiced. Perhaps if I list examples of the general practice in the office you will understand the situation. Firstly, only two of us have any kind of examinations to our credit, none of the others has even CSE or GCE, let alone secretarial qualifications. This results in two of us doing the bulk of the work, the usual approach being that we are the only ones capable. Secondly, every Friday two of them buy their vegetables during the lunch hour and sit every Friday afternoon peeling potatoes, shelling peas, dicing carrots, etc. in work time. Thirdly, all of them manage to read at least two or three library books a week, in working hours of course.

Fourthly, during this hot weather the two girls in the accounts office took their desks outside in order that they could sunbathe whilst preparing the wages. One of them changed into her bathing costume and adorned herself with suntan oil, sunglasses and a lime green sun hat. We were entertained by the sight of this apparition occasionally darting across the lawn to retrieve wage sheets which had blown away in the breeze .... During my interview I was told that they were looking for someone who could reorganise the whole filing system and advise on efficiency. At last, I thought, an organisation which appreciates the function of a secretary, and where I could put into practice the ideas which my study for the P.S.Dip. had prepared me. What a shock I was to receive. Any suggestions made were met with indignant cries of "If you think that's a good idea, do it yourself."

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The complaint of poor standards is not new. In 1898 with regard to the occupation of 'typewriter' it was said that:

'There are three distinct grades of typewriters.

To the first class belong well educated women, who probably know one or more foreign languages. These are employed in better houses, where the shorter hours are worked and the higher salaries given. A second class of typists form the staff of the better typing offices and take secondary posts in commercial houses, rarely receiving above 30s. a week, and below these are girls whose work is inferior, and who are content to earn 10s. to 15s. a week. Typing offices where good work is done deplore the influx of the latter class, as they tend to lower the standard both of work and wages.'



Some of the changes taking place at present may, however, tend to counteract the fall in status. Increased demand has led to increased salaries, which may in turn enhance the status of the occupation. It is possible that the more employers have to pay for secretaries, the more they will ensure that they are getting value for money and hence may demand higher standards and give secretaries more responsible work. In a period of economic austerity they may also be encouraged to 'shake out' those secretaries who are grossly underemployed. The high pay may restore the attractiveness of the occupation to higher calibre entrants as an alternative to other occupations. The increasing use of central typewriting facilities in larger organisations means that the difference between secretaries and other office workers may be re-established.

In order to discover the extent of any dissatisfaction with status which secretaries might be experiencing, they were asked about their feelings towards their status generally and at their place of work (Appendix 1, question nos 73 and 74). Their replies are presented in Tables XIV.7 and XIV.8. Both questions were asked because it was considered that there might be differences in feelings towards status where, in one case the reference was the wider social situation, and in the other, the work situation. Replies to the two questions show that this separation was justified.

As far as London secretaries were concerned, the great majority (61 per cent) were satisfied with their status at work, although a quarter thought it was too low. Fewer were happy with the status of the secretary's job in general; only 32 per cent



Table XIV.7      Status of a secretary's job, in general

	LONDON (n=515) %	IQPS (n=170) %	NAPS (n=73) %
Too high	18	5	5
Too low	31	67	68
Just as it should be	32	15	11
Don't know or no reply	19	13	16
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

Table XIV.8      Status of a secretary's job, at place of work

	LONDON (n=515) %	IQPS (n=170) %	NAPS (n=73) %
Too high	3	2	3
Too low	25	43	45
Just as it should be	61	45	47
Don't know or no reply	11	10	5
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

considered it was as it should be, while 31 per cent felt it was too low and 18 per cent too high. This latter figure is somewhat unexpected; all the indications have been that secretaries were deeply concerned that their status was low, and yet there was a significant proportion who felt the opposite to be the case. This may be a consequence of their relatively high earnings, one secretary remarking, 'I do think there is something seriously amiss when a secretary can demand a very high wage while professions such as teaching and nursing are so poorly paid.'

Considerably more members of IQPS and NAPS felt that the secretary's status was too low, both in general and at work, than did the sample of London secretaries. This reflects the attitudes leading to the expressed aim of both organisations to raise the status of the occupation.

On the whole, status dissatisfaction was found more in the general status of the secretary's job rather than in her status in her particular place of employment. Often secretaries in large companies are considered to have a high status, especially where they work only for top management. Such an attitude was reflected in replies to the question asking what secretaries would consider to be the peak of their careers (Chapter XIII). Many secretaries said they thought being a secretary or personal assistant to an executive in a large organisation was the summit of a secretarial career. A secretary may also judge her status at work to be high where, for example, any approach to her boss is made through her, and deference is shown to her as a consequence. Work status may be confirmed by the pay an employee receives, and indeed secretaries

who earned more were found to be more satisfied with their status at work than were those who earned less; 67 per cent of those in the upper quartile and 56 per cent of those in the lower quartile of earnings were satisfied with their status at work. This difference is statistically significant ( $\chi^2$ , 1 d.f. = 4.10,  $P < 0.05$ ). More of those in the lower quartile and inter-quartile range felt their status to be too low, than did secretaries in the upper quartile of salaries. Status at work is likely to be related to pay because it is also tied to other factors such as the status of the boss. The association between satisfaction with status and pay did not occur when the general status of the secretary's job was considered.

<sup>41</sup>  
Crozier maintained that one important criterion of satisfaction at work was that the job should be congruent with social status outside work. 'Employees with higher social origins were not satisfied at work unless they had a role and position which assured them of higher status, while their colleagues among the common people were satisfied whatever their position.' In the present study, no relationship was found between social class background and feelings towards the status of the secretary's job either at work or in general. This may simply be because the secretary's job satisfies any desire for status.

The concept of the 'reference group' may be of interest here. A reference group as described by Runciman is <sup>42</sup> a) the group with which a person compared himself; b) the group from which he derives his standards of comparison; and c) the group from which the



comparison is extended and to which he feels that he belongs. A reference group may have either a 'comparative' or a 'normative' function, or both. A 'comparative' reference group is one whose situation or attributes a person contrasts with his own. A 'normative' reference group is one from which a person takes his standards. If a secretary were from a background which was more modest than that of the company with which she mixed at work, work associations might satisfy a desire for upward mobility. The occupation may consequently have been adopted because the individual was using the office situation as a reference group (comparative function). If a secretary were from a higher social class background than the secretary just mentioned, then mixing with people of a similar class might be considered as a substitute for the occupational esteem which she might have sought and achieved had she been born male. Where she was seeking an occupation only until her marriage, a secretary's job would be a good substitute in these terms (normative function).

Although status at work appears to be related to earnings, which in turn have been found to reflect other considerations such as boss status, the detailed reasons for approximately one-third of London secretaries and two-thirds of IQPS and NAPS members being dissatisfied with their status in general, is not known. It would not be unreasonable to suggest that status dissatisfaction for many is linked with the general devaluation of the term 'secretary' and all that that involves.

## Professionalisation

One way to regain a felt loss of status is to professionalise, and some secretaries have attempted this route. Both the organisations examined in this study have tried to professionalise, the Institute of Qualified Private Secretaries by means of a qualifying examination, The National Association of Personal Secretaries by the communication of knowledge among their members, and by acting as a pressure group.

The use of the term 'profession' has frequently been adopted in the past by occupational groups in order to raise their status, although as Millerson<sup>43</sup> points out 'the mere formation of an organisation, to certificate members and control professional conduct does not immediately entitle the occupation to be designated as a profession.'

Secretaries, in attempting to professionalise, wish to be able to assure employers that a certain standard of skill, knowledge and expertise can be relied upon when a member of their association is employed. A study of secretarial students<sup>44</sup> found that a majority of intending secretaries thought of their future work as a profession rather than as a job, on the basis of training, dedication, responsibility, independence and interest in the work, as opposed to the salary.

The belief that 'secretarial work' could be a profession is not new. It was pointed out in Chapter I that R. V. Gill<sup>45</sup> in 1891 had described the occupation of 'typewriter' as a profession and not a trade, and feared that the status of the whole occupation would fall if 'typewriters' were not all highly competent workers:



'In order to render type-writing a thoroughly successful occupation for educated women it is necessary to inspire the public with confidence in the belief that they can get their copying intelligently executed, and so long as incompetent workers are scattered broadcast that is impossible.'

The writer went on to suggest 'means of advancing the profession of type-writer copyists, by a) enforcing preliminary examination before pupils are accepted for instruction; b) adopting a better system of instruction to pupils; c) keeping up a higher standard of work - I would suggest that an association or society be formed with a distinctive title, such as "Association for the Advancement of the Profession of Type-Writer Copyists", or the like (something much shorter would be preferable), consisting of those practically connected with the work, whether managers of offices or assistants, and such other persons interested in the advancement of women's work as will give their support and aid in formulating the Association, the object being to make certain resolutions and rules for the adoption of all those engaged in type-writing who may belong to the Society.'

More than sixty years later, IQPS and NAPS were formed.

There is little agreement on what constitutes a profession.

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Johnson has described the two main types of analysis of professions which have been made in the past as the 'trait' and the 'functionalist' models. The former selects various 'traits' as constituting attributes of professions, while the latter describes the elements which are said to have functional relevance, either for society



as a whole or for the professional-client relationship. Proponents of the 'trait' model do not agree on the basic characteristics which should be used to define a profession, but in any case the occupation of secretary would not conform to the majority of characteristics usually named. Millerson, for instance, says that the essential features of a profession are: it involves a skill based on theoretical knowledge; the skill requires training and education; the professional must demonstrate competence by passing a test; integrity is maintained by adherence to a code of conduct; the service is for the public good; the profession is organised. Secretaries may conform to the first three of these criteria but not the last *three*.

Johnson, however, feels that 'profession' is a term given to an occupation which has been able to develop a considerable degree of control over its members, its content and its users. He grades occupations into three types, taking into consideration the different circumstances under which they practice. The types are:

- a) collegiate, 'where the producer defines the needs of the consumer and the manner in which these needs are catered for.'
- b) patronage, 'in which the consumer defines his own needs and the manner in which they are to be met', and
- c) mediative, in which 'a third party' (e.g. the State) 'mediates in the relationship between producer and consumer defining both the needs and manner in which they are met.'

The occupation of secretary, if it were to be regarded as a profession, would fall into the 'patronage' type, in the same way as accountants employed in organisations where they have 'neither exclusive nor final responsibility for their services; ultimate

authority in the assessment of process and product lies with the patron or patrons.' The employer similarly names his or her requirements of a secretary, which she must fulfil in a manner which accords with a high standard of service.

In order to enquire into the possibility that secretaries might become a profession, in Johnson's terms, it is necessary to look at the degree of control that secretaries have over their occupation.

One limitation is that secretaries have little control over the actual work they do. Although they may aim to perform the work that is given to them to a high standard, it is in the very nature of their role that tasks are dictated by their boss's particular requirements. This means that they are not free to perform their service in the way they consider best, but must accord with the expectations of others.

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A particular problem also lies in what Wilensky has called a 'threat to exclusive jurisdiction'. This means that if the knowledge and skill on which the occupation is based uses a vocabulary which is known by most people and practices skills which are simple to acquire, then the occupational group will not be able to claim a monopoly of the skills and knowledge used and neither will it be able to gain jurisdiction over particular areas of skill and knowledge. According to Wilensky, any occupation wishing to exercise professional authority 'must find a technical basis for it, assert an exclusive jurisdiction, link both skill and jurisdiction to standards of training, and convince the public that its services are uniquely trustworthy.' For secretaries, a technical basis exists in terms of office skills and knowledge, but members of a would-be professional body such as IQPS are able to

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exert an 'exclusive jurisdiction' only over their own members, not over the occupation as a whole.

A further barrier to secretaries being considered a professional group lies in obtaining recognition by the public. The employers interviewed were asked if they had heard of the Institute of Qualified Private Secretaries, the Private Secretary's Diploma (held by all members of IQPS), or the National Association of Personal Secretaries. Sixty-four (30 per cent) had heard of the first of these, forty-nine (23 per cent) of the second and twenty (9 per cent) of the third. The relative awareness of the two organisations is probably a result of IQPS having the backing of the London Chamber of Commerce who publicise the organisation's existence. In addition, IQPS receive regular and extensive publicity when the results of the examination are announced, the winner being entitled 'secretary of the year', whereas NAPS have no special event to keep them in the public eye. Although sixty-four employers had heard about the Private Secretary's Diploma, eleven of them said they had 'vaguely' heard of it and some of the others seemed very imprecise in their knowledge of it. Three had heard of it through either the Confederation of British Industries' journal, The Financial Times, or the London Chamber of Commerce. The extent of real knowledge of the examination and the organisations was therefore limited, and the lack of knowledge may go with an incorrect impression of the organisation and Diploma. For example, one employer commented of the Private Secretary's Diploma, 'I believe that it's a pretty



second rate qualification.' Another remarked that the title 'Institute of Qualified Private Secretaries' was rather Victorian and 'offputting'. It might be expected that some employers would know more than others of the examination and possibly of the two organisations, particularly those employers who were directly concerned with personnel and the placing of secretaries. Twenty-five of the employers interviewed were in this category; they were office manager (four), office supervisor (one), personnel assistant (one), personnel director (one), personnel manager (five), personnel officer (eleven), staff manager (one) and staff supervisor (one). In fact only sixteen of them had heard of the Private Secretary's Diploma; this suggests that some employers are not looking into the question of qualifications of secretaries seriously enough, since one third of those most directly concerned were not aware of one of the highest qualifications that exists for secretaries.

Several members of IQPS complained that their qualification had been of little use to them because it was not recognized by employers, especially those outside London. For example:

'My P.S.Dip. has not been recognized either for the purpose of promotion or financial improvement - in other words it hasn't benefited me at all, although it does impress people.'

'In my present company, whilst setting high standards for the employment of clerks (many of whom are graduates), my secretarial qualifications counted for nothing. Neither were the staff unit interested in encouraging girls to train for the Diploma. For this reason, I cannot honestly recommend

girls to bother to work for it, since it does not seem to be appreciated by employers.'

'Sad to say, the Diploma has been of little value to me so far. In fact I will be bold enough to say that few employers have heard of it and are certainly not impressed.'

Unless such qualifications are recognised by those most closely concerned with their employment, secretaries, like many occupational groups attempting to professionalize may find, 'that their claims are honored by no one but themselves.'<sup>49</sup>

The actual knowledge and skill secretaries would have to possess before they would be entitled to call themselves professional persons would necessitate them acquiring a body of knowledge which was not generally available to others. Theoretical knowledge as well as practical skills would be necessary before the work could be considered to be that of a profession. Training for members of IQPS includes, as well as a high standard of English, the ability to write reports, a knowledge of office procedures and organisation including procedures at meetings, and a knowledge of current affairs. The University of Strathclyde degree course for secretaries goes considerably further and includes a study of commerce, accountancy, organisation and methods, business administration, business statistics, business and the State, and languages. The advantage of the latter course is that it enables a secretary to be of assistance to an employer in many more areas than is the case as a result of a more usual secretarial training. IQPS goes some way, and the University of Strathclyde even further, towards the realisation of a secretary's job as a



profession in terms of the possession of a body of knowledge. However, many training courses of a similar length would need to be established before an equivalent level was reached by more than a tiny fraction of secretaries. Many, indeed, acquire useful knowledge throughout their careers, but some positive indication of merit - that is a qualification - is necessary before their attainments are likely to be recognised by the outside world and before any control over their proposed professional status can be achieved.

Public recognition of professional status is said to be limited by a feeling that if the actual knowledge possessed by an occupational group is not such that an incompetent practitioner would be dangerous, then society is unlikely to regard that occupation as a profession.<sup>50</sup> Until such time as secretaries possess a wide knowledge-base and are responsible, in terms of being accountable, for their own area of activity, incompetence is likely to be seen as inconvenient rather than as threatening. Confidentiality, however, is one essential aspect of a secretary's work, breach of which could be seen as constituting a danger or threat.

A secretary has little personal authority within an organisation, although those who supervise other staff may have some. She usually has only delegated authority, which resides in her as a reflection of her boss's status rather than as a personal attribute. This may lead to her attempting to gain power in other ways which is made easier when she is used as an informal communications channel. One boss said his secretary (who had been with him for many years) was able to drop someone's name if she liked him; presumably she could equally convey an adverse impression of an individual whom she disliked. Another said that his secretary



was too overprotective in shielding him from other people; this, he suspected, was a means of her gaining some power. Indeed where a secretary has control of her boss's appointments diary, she has the power to limit access to her boss. A third employer said his secretary was prone to 'empire building' and attempted to get her way by saying, 'Mr. Blank says so-and-so'. Junior executives might be deferential to a secretary in order to find out what the boss's views were on certain matters, or use her to promote their ideas with her boss. Such techniques for gaining power could come under the term 'subversion' used by Roff<sup>51</sup> to describe 'the art of managing from below'.

To see whether secretaries felt they had any influence at work they were asked whether they had made any changes in their work situation or if they felt they had influenced their boss in any way (Appendix 1, questions 67 and 68). It is recognised that the replies to the latter question were purely subjective in nature but it was considered that some light might be thrown on possible areas of influence. In retrospect it would have been valuable to have asked employers whether they had been influenced in any way by their secretaries, but this was not done. Three quarters of both IQPS and NAPS felt they had changed their work situation in some way, while 57 per cent of the London secretaries had done so. Fewer of the secretaries in all three groups felt they had influenced their boss (36 per cent of the London sample, 43 per cent of IQPS and 48 per cent of NAPS). That more members of IQPS and NAPS than London secretaries had influenced both their working environment and their bosses,

suggests that training and seniority bring in their wake increasing influence. The kind of changes in work situation which had been brought about included reorganisation of systems, particularly of information-retrieval and correspondence work. It was repeatedly stated that reorganisation and improvements were taking place all the time to deal with changing circumstances. Influence over the boss frequently appeared to be in the nature of persuading him or her to give more responsibility to the secretary by demonstrating she was capable of undertaking delegated work. Secretaries said they often discussed issues informally with their bosses and were able to make suggestions which were adopted on a variety of matters, in two cases on the promotability of members of the managerial staff. However, the majority of replies showed a predominant influence in improving the organisation and efficiency of their boss.

The barriers to secretaries becoming professionals, in terms of their occupational control, can be summarised as:

1. The extensive use of their basic skills by others, e.g. typists, so that they are not monopolised by secretaries.
2. Many people call themselves secretaries with only minimal levels of education or training, consequently there is lack of control over entry to the occupation.
3. A lack of recognition of secretarial qualifications by those outside the secretarial associations.
4. A lack of control over their own work content.
5. Any authority or power they may possess is delegated or derived from their employer.



At the present time it might be more accurate to consider IQPS as a 'qualifying association' rather than an association of professionals. This is not to say that its work is not of the greatest value in raising standards; as Millerson says, the benefits of qualifying associations are undeniable and immeasurable, 'the best were founded as sincere attempts to gain self improvement, reaching a recognised status by means of a long and determined effort. Our society profits by their presence.'<sup>52</sup> Neither is it to say that in the future a secretary's job may not become a profession. The organisation of the secretarial occupation has only just begun and time has been found to be an important element in the process of professionalisation.<sup>53</sup> One study of professionalisation in Britain listed a number of traits (thirteen) which measured the progress of professionalisation among qualifying associations.<sup>54</sup> Secretaries, so far, conform to only one of these traits, and that is, having an explicit ethic of confidentiality. In time, as more secretaries become better qualified, they may exhibit other features of a profession.

Regarding NAPS, by contrast, the association does not have a qualifying examination, membership being based upon seniority and experience. These are both valuable commodities for secretaries, but the lack of an examination, which provides external evidence of a certain standard of achievement, limits even further the members' desire to be recognised as a professional organisation. Otherwise all that has been said about IQPS applies equally to NAPS. This organisation might more accurately be described as an 'occupational interest group'.



There are certain similarities between the occupation of secretary and that of nurse (the latter has been referred to as a 'semi-profession') which may have some bearing on the question of professionalisation for secretaries. Nurses, like secretaries, are said not to have acquired a distinct body of knowledge which is accepted by their medical colleagues and which would enable them to be recognized as a profession. This may, however, be the consequence of their having been kept in a 'caste-like subservience to doctors, and their lack of success has then been used to justify keeping them in their low status .... It may be asked whether the nurses' assistance of the doctor ... does not inevitably make her into the physician's assistant rather than his colleague.'

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The fact that a secretary is an assistant to an individual, rather than being a person performing a skilled general office function, may limit her upward mobility and aspirations to become a professional person.

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It has also been claimed that occupations in which women predominate, such as social work, are more likely to accept bureaucratic controls which are imposed on them, and less likely to seek professional status. Women are said to be more willing to defer to men and society is less willing to grant autonomy to women than to men. Women's attachment to their family role means they give less importance to their colleagues as a reference group and are therefore less pressing in their professional claims.

Professionalisation by secretaries may be achieved in the future by improved training, with a consequent widening of their knowledge base, and by reliable qualifications, together with the

general recognition of the value of such qualifications on the part of employers. By these changes secretaries may not only regain their lost prestige, but at the same time provide an improved service.

#### Membership of trade unions

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Prandy has said that the essential difference between professions and trade unions is in their underlying ideologies - trade unions are 'class' bodies which bargain with employers, while professional associations are 'status' bodies which bestow a qualification and seek to maintain or enhance their prestige. The IQPS on this basis would be considered as a professional association. In recent years the differences between professional associations and trade unions have become blurred; there has been a rapid growth of 'white collar' unions, while professional associations have adopted some of the bargaining tactics of trade unions.

One indication of the orientations of individuals is seen in their willingness to join trade unions. Women are far less likely to belong to a trade union than men - only one in four of women workers is a union member, compared with one in two male workers, and they form only 24 per cent of T.U.C. membership though 38 per cent of the work force of the country.<sup>58</sup> The small numbers of women shop stewards, and a passive attitude towards union activity generally, has been explained by their additional responsibilities. Many women have not only full-time jobs but responsibility for the home and family in addition; this, combined



with the negative attitudes towards women adopted by some unions, helps to explain the differential membership and the comparative inactivity of women in union affairs.<sup>59</sup>

In London, out of the five hundred and fifteen secretaries taking part in the survey, thirty-three (6 per cent) belonged to a trade union (Appendix 1, question no.70). Almost all of them (twenty-nine) were members of the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades (SOGAT) and are accounted for by secretaries working for newspapers. One secretary belonged to the National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO) and three to the Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union (CAWU). Twenty further secretaries belonged to a staff association. It seems that where the majority of workers within an industry are members of a union, then the secretaries will also tend to belong, since there is then no conflict between their membership and identification with their employer, and this is particularly true when the bosses themselves are union members. It might be expected that secretaries working closely with bosses, would tend to identify with the management side of industry. Another reason for so few secretaries belonging to a union is that many are employed in isolated work situations and this would militate against collective action.

What is perhaps surprising is that 10 per cent of both IQPS and of NAPS members belonged to a trade union as well as to their 'professional associations'; they were almost exclusively members of NALGO. It would appear that there was no conflict in their allegiances, instead, they might be said to be getting the best of both worlds. On the one hand the membership of IQPS or NAPS helps to raise their status, while on the other, membership of a trade union helps to raise their standards of employment.



The picture is clarified by the replies to a question asking secretaries who belonged to unions whether their membership was compulsory (Appendix 1, question no.71). In the London sample only two secretaries belonged to a trade union voluntarily; for the rest, membership was compulsory. However, for the members of IQPS and NAPS the situation was reversed, and with the exception of two members of IQPS and one of NAPS, they all chose to belong to unions voluntarily. It may be that these members of IQPS and NAPS were not concerned with the status or class considerations of organisations, but were more interested in improving their employment situation by whatever means were at their disposal.

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## CHAPTER XV

### THE SECRETARY'S JOB AS A TRADITIONAL FEMALE ROLE

'A role is a capacity in which someone acts in relation to others. It is, of course, a metaphor from the theatre, where a role is a part assumed by one actor in a play where others assume other parts.'<sup>1</sup> Roles define roughly how people think others ought to behave in certain situations, and how they usually do behave. Individuals play more than one role; for instance, a woman might at different times in a single day play the role of wife, mother, employee, supervisor and student, supposing that she is married with children, works as a supervisor and is attending an evening class. Each of these roles involves different behaviour and different expectations from others. At times the roles may conflict: this same woman may have to attend evening classes in order to learn more about her work, but her roles as mother and wife may demand that she stays at home in the evenings.

Although differences between men's and women's roles have diminished in the last century, they have by no means disappeared. On the whole, men are still expected to be aggressive, achievement-oriented and dominant, and women to be passive, gentle and submissive. While apparent differences in attitude and behaviour between men and women do exist, they frequently represent, at least in part, the effects of cultural pressures which have encouraged people to behave in certain ways, rather than of true biological determinants.



Furthermore, these differences have been over-emphasised at times.

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As Harriet Holter has pointed out, 'the scientific reports on average differences between men's and women's dispositions probably reach the public in an oversimplified version. The differences may be exaggerated, and the implications of great dispersions and overlap not grasped, with the result that average differences are turned into a picture of differences between all men and all women.'

Recently, traditional expectations of the roles that men and women play in society have been questioned; the role of women has received the greatest attention since it is they who are generally considered to be more disadvantaged by sex distinctions than men, although there are very many men as well who find their prescribed roles to be in conflict with their personality or inclinations.

Once roles become established, society tends to reward participants for conforming to them, and to punish those who do not: 'When a man takes the initiative, for example, the social approval he earns serves as a primary reward which confirms his feelings of masculinity and reinforces his conformity with the norms of his sex role. Initiative can also earn secondary rewards such as success on the job, economic gain, and political power. A woman who is passive and seeks protection thereby earns a primary reward, the high esteem of her femininity by herself and others. She may also gain a secondary reward, such as a husband who provides for her economically.'

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Punishments by society are often accorded in terms of ridicule and loss of status, so that men in predominantly female occupations may suffer a loss of status

from the stigma of being 'feminine', while women who strive to achieve eminence in an aggressive business man's world are often accused of being 'masculine'.

There may also be a reluctance on the part of individuals to adapt their roles. Holter has pointed out that 'Increasing ambiguity in sex roles presents a threat to women as well as men since the abandonment of old privileges are at stake. Protection, dependency and passivity may, in the present culture, be as attractive to women as power and self-enhancement at the expense of women are to men.'

Observed differences between men and women, whether biologically or culturally determined, have been described in Sex, Career and Family.<sup>5</sup> Men 'tend to exceed women in forcefulness, in the capacity to analyse a situation and break through to new patterns, and in mathematical and mechanical ability; and generally, in objective, abstract, impersonal thinking and the definition of formal structures and rules. Women on the other hand ... tend to exceed men in the ability to make the best of relationships within a given framework; in responding sympathetically to a given situation, as apart from abstracting from it and creating a new and original one; in dealing with interiors rather than structures; in meticulous application rather than the fixing of broad outlines. They tend also to have the advantage in qualitative, not necessarily precise, but expressive methods of thinking and communication; in language and feeling rather than mathematics; in what Chester Barnard labelled the 'non-logical' (not to be confused with illogical) and informal as apart from the formal and mathematical approach to problems. Women tend to be more conciliatory, concerned with service rather than with competition ... Their training



tends to be specially concerned with personal relationships and small groups, and to leave them with an interest in people rather than problems. For qualified women with high earning capacity money is important in many ways: as a symbol of professional and personal recognition ... and in terms of the personal and family standard of living which it makes possible. But it tends to matter less to women than to men in terms of power and wealth as such. Women are more likely than men to be, not necessarily unambitious, but ambitious in an unspecialised way, concerned less with achieving top success in a particular field than with balanced achievement.'

These differences are only average differences and not consistent differences, consequently they are not applicable to a considerable proportion of each sex, although it is common for such differences to be seen as universal by employers.

'There is a tendency to attribute to all women an undifferentiated set of characteristics, whereas in fact there are substantial differences in respect of these characteristics both between individuals and between groups of women of different social background, education and training.'

That secretaries are now mostly women may result partly from the compatability between their roles in society and at work.

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Zweig has commented of women, that having 'the idea of service ingrained in them, since they have been serving their men since time immemorial, makes them more submissive, obedient and surrendering. They will regard it as quite natural that they are ordered about.



They don't answer back as much as men. They are more willing to serve and to oblige. They are more patient and long-suffering and placid. They will more frequently put up with any job. They are more ready to be used as a cog in the wheel, performing without thinking about the whole ... They do not aspire to higher positions, to better jobs and foremost ranks. That is what is often referred to by managers who say: "They regard themselves rather as helpmates or assistants of men, not as competitors to their jobs". That is why they are so good as secretaries.'

Although this submissive picture is not applicable to those secretaries who are discontented with their role and do aspire to higher positions, there are many who are happy with it. They actively seek to behave in a way which accords with a submissive definition of their work role, including self-effacement and modesty, while placing particular emphasis upon their supportive function, as the following examples from the present study illustrate:

'Although possessing a very important post, a secretary should not assume personal importance in status, should be seen but not heard, unless being heard is vital to the smooth running of the office. She should respect the boss first and foremost, being absolutely loyal to him even when she disagrees with what he is doing.'

'She should look after her boss's interests and keep him happy, relaxed but ready for work. She should never nag but gently see that the utmost work is done as quickly as possible, take his telephone calls properly and never

embarrass him, always putting him right in the eyes of his callers or clients. She must make allowances for irritability due to overwork and worry, and share his worries with him.'

' ... sharing in his triumphs and failures, cheering him up when he is down, reminding him about things if necessary, including personal matters.'

'A secretary should be capable of taking a part of her boss's work load from him. She should be able to work without supervision and use her initiative to the full. She should, however, know her place and be discreet.'

'I feel that a secretary should be something akin to an angel of mercy to her boss since I believe her primary occupation is to take care of him and his work. I believe she should be responsible enough to relieve him of whatever detail she can and sensitive enough to interpret his moods and wishes. She should respect and like her boss and have a good rapport with him.'

'A secretary is like a wife. She should have the aptitude of being sympathetic, good natured, calm, have respect for her boss as he should have for her. If she works to the best of her ability and is careful of her appearance and can command some of the necessities of secretarial work she will be a good, and hopefully, a well-appreciated secretary. She should help her boss as much as she can in any way and not quibble about tempers, late hours and so on.'

' ... to retain one's femininity, although being efficient, as many bosses appreciate this in the competitive modern stresses of living.'

' ... a nursemaid to one's boss, but efficient and willing to do all his work whatever it is with good humour.'

' ... accept as a matter of course that you are always wrong according to your boss, and try not to be outwardly too triumphant when you have obviously been right.'

Such comments remain consistent with advice being given  
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to secretaries almost forty years ago:

'A private secretary must not hanker after a career of her own. It is true that as the years pass she may realize that a little reflected glory is shining upon her; but she must not attempt to go out in search of it. She must be content to be the drop of oil which makes the machine work smoothly. It is not necessary always to agree entirely with her employer's ideas and principles, but if hers differ, they must be kept in the background.'

Some employers shared these attitudes:

'Secretaries are acting out their natural role. Men like to think that a secretary is the boss's woman first and foremost.'

'They are very comforting. If you are unhappy, discuss it with her and she is the one who gives you encouragement not to worry.'

'It is a theory of mine that a secretary is an extension of a businessman's wife. The secretary does in the office what a wife does in the home, from a backing up point of view.'

'A secretary should have an admiration for her boss and then she would be a better secretary.'



In striking contrast there were those secretaries who strongly disliked the submissive role which they felt was enforced upon them, together with its implications. They frequently complained, not so much of being office wives, but of being office servants:

'I am looking for another job at the moment - I hate the feeling of running around for someone like a skivvy.'

'Unfortunately a secretary is often regarded as a waitress cum typist. I feel she should be given more responsibility by her boss and be able to do some interesting work and not just the duller things which he has passed over.'

'Sorry to harp on the subject, but the dreadfully irritating habit of regarding secretaries as odd-job women, waitresses, etc. should really die out soon. For example, the secretaries here were invited to an office party to celebrate the firm's success, and invited to act as barmaids and washers-up.'

'I have no illusions about the secretary's job. It is not quite as bad as being a 'glorified slave', but you are subjected to running around for someone and not often in my job is there opportunity for, say, writing letters, as the work is so technical. If I were really career-minded I would never have chosen secretarial work, where there is not enough opportunity for self-expression.'

'Having been a secretary for twenty-five years, I often feel very frustrated at the way in which some bosses make it clear that a secretary should be seen and not heard.'

In Chapter XII some secretaries cited tea- or coffee-making as a particular feature of their jobs which they disliked. This is possibly because it symbolises the domestic and servant role which is often associated with the task, apart from the fact that it is unskilled and time consuming. Perhaps if it were considered in a more therapeutic light, as the administering of stimulants to keep the office going efficiently it might be viewed differently. One secretary remarked, 'I dislike making tea and coffee, but as I'm the only girl this is inevitable.'

The secretary has often been termed an 'office wife', and indeed there are many similarities between them where the wife is also a housewife. They are both not only supportive towards, but dependent upon, a particular individual for income and status, and for many secretaries, the work role is seen as the creation of a relationship, just as marriage is between husbands and wives:

'This is a very vulnerable occupation - personalities matter almost too much. A man may employ an accountant or sales representative he does not like. He will surely like his secretary or she will be out.'

'I find that whilst certain departments and types of work are more interesting than others, and some bosses dole out favours (like going home early if we are slack), I am happiest when working for a man that I like and respect and then I enjoy the job no matter if the work is not my favourite



subject, or if I do longer hours, or if I get kept after time. Compatibility of temperament seems the most important thing to me between the boss and secretary, as if I disliked a boss I wouldn't work for him for a £10 a week increase.'

It could be claimed that a secretary's job has changed in the same way as a housewife's. Whereas middle-class housewives in the past had servants to do the menial work while theirs was an administrative and organisational job in the home, now they do all the work previously undertaken by maids, nannies and cooks. Secretaries have suffered the same fate. The office boy has disappeared, probably to take a management training course, and the secretary performs his role as well as that of a personal aide and assistant.

The feminisation of the secretary's job does fulfil certain functions which, although having certain advantages for women, are mainly advantageous to men.

1. It enables both men and women to adopt socially acceptable roles, since the majority of employers of secretaries are male, and secretaries female. The boss, usually male, plays a dominant and the secretary, usually female, a supportive role, not necessarily in terms of their personalities but in terms of their relative positions of authority.
2. It enables men to be promoted to more senior positions while leaving women to do the routine work. Men who might formerly have attained management positions by first serving an apprenticeship as a secretary can now enter at junior management levels. Since women are not expected to want promotion or are expected to leave



their jobs in the short term, they are not given, and often do not seek, promotion. Three secretaries pointed this out forcibly:

'The bank at which I was employed in 1968 was very proud that it had one female sub-manager (not a Board appointment) in charge of a very small branch; a few managers' deputies in small branches and some Board appointees (i.e. full managerial status) in posts such as staff controller, who were women. I was quietly fighting this negative attitude throughout my five years as District Manager's secretary. Every move to seek more absorbing or demanding work was countered by the comment that it must be reserved for training a man as a prospective manager. I have certainly gained the impression that this bank lost many of its women staff with the greatest potential, often far greater than the men who were considerably more highly paid for lower-quality work.'

'I believe that a secretary 'runs out' as soon as she realises that there is nothing for her beyond her present job. She often has the galling experience of seeing young men quickly pass her own salary level and gain more responsibility, simply because for them the management door stands wide open.'

'There are still far too many capable women in business who are tied to a typewriter and a large proportion of their time wasted on routine jobs, even though they are given the titles of personal assistant. Similar p.a. duties carried out (often less efficiently) by young men in training for executive positions would never be expected to combine such shorthand-typing duties with their p.a. job.'

One possible effect of this situation is that women who feel they are regarded in a different light to men, will not perform as well as those women who are regarded as having equal potential with men. <sup>9</sup> Fogarty et al. have raised the question whether

'employers can expect good service and low turnover from highly qualified women employed even at junior levels if these women have reason to feel that they are treated as second-class citizens, expected to abandon their careers on having children, and denied the consideration for promotion given to men of the same ability.' If it is believed that women tend to change their jobs more frequently, this becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: because they are expected to leave, many are not promoted or given responsibility, thus prompting them to change their jobs. One employer in this survey said that women were not put on management courses until they were twenty-six because before that time women left in great numbers; but since women candidates were also expected to type, the firm did not feel they had wasted their money by employing them.

3. The practice of attaching a secretary to a single individual, and measuring her promotion according to the status of her boss, means that employers put secretaries on a completely different promotion ladder to other employees, thus structurally limiting their advancement. This is probably allowed to happen because of a 'natural' feeling of it being right for women to progress in this way. It also encourages the secretary's use as a status symbol. One respondent remarked: 'Office men, as opposed to



professional men, are in great need of a subordinate female to build up their ego; whether they are married or unmarried, they like to feel they are very much the dominant male (they are usually rather insignificant people). Men who have a more definite vocational job, such as doctors, designers, architects, teachers, lecturers, writers, etc., do not seem to feel this need.' It has been found elsewhere that it is the less-able men who have the greatest resentment towards women, probably because they pose more of a threat; this was especially true of routine middle

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managers. It may be that as more of the less-able men were given secretaries as status symbols, they have helped to sow the seeds of discontent among secretaries, since such men are likely to delegate less and to have more repressive attitudes towards women. Such attitudes may provide yet another reason why promotion is measured according to the status of the employer, for senior people, feeling more secure in their own positions, will be more likely to delegate work and will generally treat secretaries as responsible assistants rather than as status symbols.

If women are not given positions of responsibility, they have little or no opportunity to demonstrate their suitability for promotion. It is, indeed, often in the interests of the employer to discourage a secretary's promotion; since she will have learned how best to assist him in his work, her promotion would deprive him of this experienced assistant.



4. Women secretaries are not seen as a threat by male bosses. The supportive nature of the secretary's role means that a man can leave his female secretary to stand in for him without feeling that he might be eased out of his position by a competitor, and this limits the pressure upon him. It has been pointed out that not only secretaries, but also women in industrial management where they often do not aim for the highest positions, are seen as 'loyal and impartial advisers with no axe to grind, as having the confidence of senior men who do not have to fear them as competitors, and as free to speak out because they have no promotion to lose. Men can fill this sort of role, like women, but when a woman does so her position is often more apparent and clear-cut.'

11

5. In recent years, encouraged by advertisements by employment agencies, an attempt has been made to glamourise the occupation of secretary. This is both detrimental to the status of the job and demeaning, for it treats women as sex-objects rather than as workers. Glamourisation of the occupation means that older women feel rejected and tend to find work in other spheres, as comments by former secretaries have shown they do (Chapter XIII); this may result in older women ceasing to be attracted back to the occupation after having brought up families, thus contributing towards the youth of the occupation, and the continuing justification for treating secretaries as impermanent and irresponsible workers. The use of such advertising may be halted if the recommendations proposed in the government document on equal opportunities for men and women are adopted.

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This process of glamourising the secretary has a distinct parallel in the change of the bank teller's job in the United States of America, as described by Prather.<sup>13</sup> Some years ago the bank teller's job fell entirely within man's domain. 'Men handled financial matters because it was assumed that women were not interested in such activities and furthermore women's minds were incapable of and unaccustomed to what was referred to as "doing figuring", and making financial transactions.' An expansion in financial activity and consequent increase in paper work coincided with the loss of men, due to the Second World War, and women were taken on to do the work. 'Although traditional bank policy was to promote from within the bank so as to reward employees for loyalty, honesty and steadfastness, the demand for highly trained officers led to a program of recruiting among college graduates for men who would shortly move into management positions rather than begin in the clerical or teller positions. With the new policy of hiring young, but highly educated men to become officers, the teller's position diminished in prestige, responsibility, skill and advancement opportunities .... As the status of the teller's job declined, few men applied for the position when other more promising opportunities arose. Hence, by default, rather than design, women were hired as tellers in major banks ... Because more and more women were hired as tellers, the job became redefined as a typical "woman's job". Today, bank folklore, in contrast to former views, argues that women are better tellers than men because women can best perform the routine procedures and methodical details. Officers now perform many of the responsibilities formerly assigned to tellers ... Once the teller's position was defined as women's work, the common



myth prevailed that women in contrast to men are not interested in careers. The teller's job which provides little advancement is thus considered ideal for women who are assumed to be uninterested in advancement.' Subsequently, banks encouraged the image of a teller as 'glamorous' in order to provide secondary rewards for remaining in the job. 'Thus the glamorization of the teller's position has allowed more women to move in to banking firms, but it has not opened the doors for significant numbers of women to move up to top positions.' Consequently, as Prather has pointed out, glamorization may provide a substitute for responsibility and promotion. This might satisfy younger, but not older, women. As was previously pointed out, some secretaries in the present study felt that it was difficult for them to find jobs if they were over thirty-five years of age, because they believed employers only wanted young, pretty things about them. It is interesting that this impression remains although it is erroneous, as the comments of employers will later show.

Although a glamorous appearance is sometimes of real importance where the job involves contact with the public and the firm wishes to promote a glamorous image, the apparent demand for glamour has gone beyond this level. By examining newspaper advertisements for secretaries over the years, it can be seen that the image many advertisers have been increasingly intending to convey is that of a well-paid sex-object. It was only after 1965, coinciding with a great increase in employment agency advertisements, that such glamour-oriented advertisements began to appear at all regularly although the practice now appears to have considerably diminished. Such advertising may have been a consequence of the need to attract younger



secretaries. Whatever the cause, it did not pass without comment.

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A letter to The Times remarked: 'The prose favoured by all too many of your advertisers for these [secretarial] posts, prompts me to wonder what would be my husband's reaction to: "Well-groomed, vivacious accountant with sense of humour to assist in establishment of new merchant bank. Pleasant personality and good telephone manner essential. Plush surroundings. Generous salary and l.v.s to right applicant." Even this "impeccably-mannered cutie of a gentlewoman in her 30s" (Women's Appointments September 6) expects a little more of employers, and remains still hopeful of better things.' In one advertisement in The Times,<sup>15</sup> for a secretary, placed by a Professor of Industrial Relations, the initial requirements were for 'a well-groomed secretary with good educational qualifications ...'.

The type of advertisement which asked for a secretary who will be a "Cleopatra to clients, nanny to consultants", or 'gladden her boss's heart by her presence, her shape, her smile ...', who is 'a corker to look at', or is 'as good as she is beautiful', are likely to be offensive to those who are neither young nor beautiful. Most of such advertising is inserted by employment agencies. They may attract young girls but do so only by giving them a grossly distorted picture of secretarial work. It is distorted, because most of a secretary's time will be spent, at least at first, behind a typewriter, which is not the most glamorous of situations. Furthermore, by emphasising the sexual aspect they demean the valuable work which secretaries do. It is likely that the

shortage of secretaries and the growth in employment agencies has encouraged the use of such advertising, because it has forced individual agencies to adopt increasingly strident and eye-catching means to attract staff to their particular organisation. Such means of attracting job applicants may eventually prove to be counter-productive, particularly if it is hoped to bring back older secretaries. Those to whom this kind of appeal is successful are likely to be just the kind of women who are least wanted by employers.

In some cases the training received by secretaries promotes a similar image. One secretarial course has, in the words of a magazine directed towards trainee secretaries <sup>16</sup> 'shed the dull (and seldom used) subjects such as company law, advanced book-keeping and the history of mercantile banking. In their place shorthand and typing are interspersed with exciting and practical sessions on hair, make-up, deportment, dress sense, manicure, hygiene and diet, free movement and mime, modern beat dancing ... there are talks and demonstrations too on cookery ... and on flower arranging ... RSA and Pitman's examinations in shorthand and typing are taken, but the real purpose of the training is to give each girl soundly-based confidence and to groom her for a better-than-average post.' What job for men would include in its training such items as grooming or deportment? A man would consider it an insult to be told the kind of clothes he should wear to the office or to remember to wash his hair regularly. There is no evidence to suggest that men give any less offence to their female associates by their personal appearance or hygiene than women do to men.



It must therefore be assumed that many teachers, employers and secretaries feel that it is appropriate to dwell on these things. Even Punch was moved to ask why the woman office worker came in for such a flood of advice like that contained in a Pitman's 'Personality in Business' course: 'Do men get this clucking-hen treatment in papers and magazines? Or does natural common-sense prevent them from turning up at interviews clutching Mum and looking a total wreck?'<sup>17</sup>

It may be that young women are so lacking in self-confidence that they place an unusually high importance upon their appearance in order to give them some sense of security. This form of confidence-seeking may be adopted because in present day society a high value is placed upon a woman's physical attributes and general appearance. Also, women have more decisions to make about clothing since they have a greater variety of choice than men.

Appearance was mentioned spontaneously by some employers as being a feature they would consider of importance in an ideal secretary (Appendix 7, question no.5). This was partly in order to give a glamorous image of the company where this mattered, for example in the entertainment industry, or because appearance symbolised other personal attributes:

'People who take a pride in their appearance are the ones who make good secretaries. I always feel that someone who looks untidy will be untidy.'

'A man of my generation needs someone who looks neat and well-groomed, for example in her hands and shoes.

It means discipline of mind.'

A poor dress sense may also indicate to an employer that a secretary lacks a sense of the appropriate. Men, as well as women,



are subject to criticism on the grounds of their appearance by employers. Long hair, for instance, has been associated with certain values, but although adverse feelings about it may exist among employers it would not be mentioned in an advertisement for a job, although it might affect a decision to appoint an individual seen at an interview. Yet advertisers seem to feel perfectly free to lay down specifications about appearance where secretaries are concerned.

In summary, it would appear that the functions served by the feminisation of the secretary's job include the following:

1. It enables men and women to adopt socially acceptable roles.
2. It enables men to be promoted over the heads of women.
3. It structurally limits promotion for secretaries because it is considered 'natural' to measure advancement in terms of employer status.
4. It reduces anxiety since women secretaries are not a threat to male employers.
5. It has enabled the occupation to be glamourised and this in turn may provide a secondary reward for the low status it helps to create.

It is possible that the secretary's job might attract to it women who were more 'traditional' in their role expectations rather than those who were 'equalitarian', since they would know that the likelihood of working for a woman was small. In order to test the situation, secretaries were asked what were their attitudes in general to men, in terms of their relative superiority or

inferiority (Appendix 1, question no.79) - Table XV.1.

Table XV.1                      In your attitude to the opposite sex,  
do you think of men in general as being ...?

	LONDON (n=515) %	IQPS (n=170) %	NAPS (n=73) %
Very superior	1	1	-
Superior	28	20	10
Equal	61	68	81
Inferior	2	1	3
Very inferior	1	-	-
Don't know or no reply	7	10	6
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

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When Dale asked this question of women who had attended both mixed and single-sex schools, he found no significant difference between the two groups. There seemed to be a consistent core of women, between a quarter and a third, who thought of men as superior irrespective of their social contact with the opposite sex. Over a quarter of secretaries in the London sample felt that in general men were superior to women (although the problem of criteria occurs, since possibly women meant by 'superior' that they hold better jobs or earn more money. Nevertheless the question did say 'in general'.) The great majority of secretaries saw men as equal to women, although more of NAPS than either IQPS or the London sample thought men and women were equal. Similarly, members of NAPS thought men to be significantly less superior than did either London secretaries or members of IQPS ( $\chi^2$ , 2 d.f. = 13.83,  $P < 0.001$ )





they are no worse than men. Another possible explanation is that, with more occupational choice for women, those who actually decided to become secretaries in recent times were more traditional in their attitudes, because the role corresponds with their conception of the relative positions in society of men and women. Previously, when there was less occupational choice, women of all kinds took up secretarial work.

The association between age and a feeling of equality may provide a further explanation of the frustration felt by older secretaries about their prospects - if they grow to feel that men are no longer superior, it is much less easy for them to be satisfied with a submissive role, one that may in fact have suited them earlier. It may also imply that a secretary's job is indeed more suitable for younger women and naturally loses its appeal for the older ones.

The feeling among women of male superiority has been confirmed in the United States: 'A witty experiment by Philip Goldberg proves what everyone knows, that having internalized the disesteem in which they are held, women despise both themselves and each other. This simple test consisted of asking women undergraduates to respond to the scholarship in an essay signed alternately by one John McKay and one Joan McKay. In making their assessments the students generally agreed that John was a remarkable thinker, Joan an unimpressive mind. Yet the articles were identical: the reaction was dependent on the sex of the supposed author.'

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In another experiment it was discovered that when a series of paintings was presented to a group of women, and one half was told they were painted by men and the other

that they were painted by women, those which were thought to have been painted by men were consistently rated higher than those  
21  
thought to have been painted by women.

If women are considered as inferior to men and as having less status generally, then secretaries might be less willing to work for them, since this would reflect upon their own status which is derived from their boss. In keeping with this view was the finding that among London secretaries 56 per cent would not be happy to work for a woman (Appendix 1, question no.78) - Table XV.3.

Table XV.3                      Would you be happy to work for a woman?

	LONDON (n=515) %	IQPS (n=170) %	NAPS (n=73) %
Yes	31	37	34
No	56	45	52
Don't know	13	18	14

This is an unhappy state of affairs for women in management and for secretaries aspiring to management, since successful women are obviously considered less desirable people for whom to work than men. There may be several explanations for this. Firstly, as has already been mentioned, secretaries may be less willing to work for women as generally women have less status than men. Secondly, it may express a feeling of discomfort at an unexpected role situation, which might make working for a woman boss less acceptable. Thirdly, a considerable mythology exists

about women who succeed in their careers, which is subscribed to by both men and women. Since women are often recognised as having to be better at their jobs than men in equivalent positions they are often caricatured as aggressive people, who are hard or ruthless; this would tend to make them appear as somewhat daunting employers. Fourthly, sexual gambits cannot be used when working for a woman.

Interraction between the sexes is governed by a set of rules which includes the concept of chivalry. Chivalrous acts such as holding doors open and allowing women to enter a room first may, like glamourisation, provide secondary rewards for women at work by making them feel valued. Kate Millet<sup>22</sup> has described chivalrous behaviour as 'a sporting kind of reparation to allow the subordinate female certain means of saving face. While a palliative to the injustice of woman's social position, chivalry is also a technique for disguising it. One must acknowledge that the chivalrous stance is a game the master group plays in elevating its subject to pedestal level.' When men behave in a chivalrous manner towards women, it is more likely to be a result of learned behaviour than a means of indicating their superiority. Chivalrous acts tend to be adopted by men from higher social class backgrounds, and as both they and their secretaries have high social class origins, chivalry might be a form of behaviour anticipated by secretaries, which would not operate when they had a woman boss.



It was perhaps surprising to find that even 45 per cent of the IQPS secretaries, who generally had a more ambitious attitude to their work, were unwilling to work for women. The implication is that for a considerable proportion of highly trained secretaries, the sexual component of their jobs is of great significance.

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Holter has suggested that occupational discrimination and the assignment of low prestige may cause women to react with 'the self-derogation that results when one accepts one's status in the eyes of those in power, and the inverted prejudice that results when one diverts the aggression to one's own group.'

That a substantial proportion of secretaries, although they tended to be the younger ones, felt men to be superior, and that the majority were not prepared to work for women, tends to confirm this theory.

There is some evidence that women with more egalitarian attitudes were more prepared to work for women than those who felt men were superior. Whereas only 39 per cent of those who thought men were superior were prepared to work for a woman, 47 per cent of those who thought men and women were equal, would do so.

The reluctance to work for a woman reflects an attitude fostered by women themselves. For example, a serious book containing advice for secretaries, written by a woman, stated: 'You can take it for certain that you will not last long working for a woman if you attempt to draw the attention of any males in the offing if she is under sixty.'<sup>24</sup> However, one secretary, in defence of her woman boss, remarked, 'The person I now work for

is a woman, and I find that she is better to work for than any of the seven men for whom I have previously worked. She is much more tolerant and aware of people's problems.'

A considerable mythology exists about the sexual component of the secretary/boss relationship. It is epitomised and reinforced by such books as Helen Gurley Brown's Sex and the Office<sup>25</sup> and Sex and the Single Girl<sup>26</sup> which have received considerable publicity, and in which offices are portrayed as 'sexier than Turkish harems'.<sup>27</sup>

When the present research project was discussed informally with men in its initial stages, the immediate response, almost without exception, was jocular and sexually aware. For example: 'I have an excellent secretary - she fits very well on my knee', or, 'My secretary looks after me so well that my wife is jealous', or simply, 'Can I help you with your research?' This kind of response was so frequent that it was considered important to ask questions of secretaries about the delicate matter of sexual feelings associated with their work and the relationship with their boss, although this was done with considerable ambivalence since a questionnaire ought not to contain questions of a personal nature. The intention was to separate myth from reality by asking secretaries whether sexual feelings played a real part in their working lives. They were first asked: 'It is often believed that the relationship between boss and secretary is so close that it leads to a romantic involvement. Do you think this is a true picture?' (Appendix 1, question no.80).

Among London secretaries, 4 per cent replied 'yes' to the question, 28 per cent 'no', and 60 per cent 'sometimes'. They were then asked whether they themselves had 'ever felt a romantic attachment to any boss?' (Appendix 1, question no.81). Among London secretaries, 79 per cent replied 'no', and 17 per cent 'yes'. A few of those who said 'yes' added remarks like 'it was when I was seventeen', or 'yes, but I was the only one who knew'. These replies indicate that sexual attraction plays a part for only a small minority of secretaries, and some at least of them never communicated their feelings to the boss. It is recognized, however, that a personal question of this nature might not have elicited a true answer from respondents.

Employers were not unaware of the sexual component in the work situation and some mentioned it spontaneously: 'Often the relationship is sexual - I tend to choose a secretary for her physical attractiveness, although really I should not do so because it is too threatening. After all, one spends more time with one's secretary than one does with one's wife. A man in this company got involved with his secretary and she blackmailed him. He lost his job and his home as a result, so I made up my mind never to allow this to happen.'

'A good secretary can be a godsend. It's a relationship, where understanding grows between a secretary and her employer. It has been said that a good secretary knows more about her boss than she should and vice versa. It's probably true. It has got to be said though, that it is only a fool who allows an emotional thing to arise. I can well see that the atmosphere would be just right for such a thing to occur, especially where



they are highly compatible, but I have never found any difficulty'.

'Secretaries are invaluable and in many respects they don't have their due. Too many bosses' wives think their husband sleeps with her, and probably it is commoner than one thinks. But it is a fact of life. A secretary is on special terms with the man she works for and there is no way out of that.'

Social interaction outside work between employers and their secretaries was fairly common, over half (52 per cent) of secretaries having had some association with their boss outside the office (Appendix 1, question no.82). In the main this took the form of casual meals, either lunch or dinner during the working week, or at a formal occasion, for example representing the firm at a function. Only 2 per cent had been on a 'date' with their bosses. Among London secretaries, 5 per cent had been invited to the homes of their boss to meet their families, compared with 18 per cent of both IQPS and NAPS, possibly because this is a more common procedure outside London. It does, however, imply friendliness rather than a sexual relationship. Where relationships had been changed by any of this out-of-work interaction, it was usually thought to have been beneficial by helping the secretary to get to know her boss better and consequently being able to be of more practical help.

The foregoing has shown how the roles of woman and secretary may be related. It should be stressed that although some secretaries strongly objected to certain aspects of their secretarial role, for others it posed no such problem. Indeed,

an excellent working partnership may be the result of mutual role compatibility between a secretary and her boss in which personalities and abilities complement each other. One employer said, 'Secretaries in general are "God's gift to men". It is an ideal partnership in the office as it is in the family. The decisions are taken by the man - they have to take many unpleasant and courageous and stressful decisions - while women don't. Men hate detail, and women are good at it. Men proliferate impractical ideas, but don't like to see them through. In the secretary/boss relationship their roles, traits and strengths complement each other - it is desirable, constructive and satisfying. But as in marriage, it has to be a successful relationship to work.'

A problem arises because the secretary/woman role which suits some so well is disliked by others. Where a secretary is happy to define her work role as making another person more efficient (and many secretaries did define their work in this way), the secretary/woman role poses no conflict. Where, however, a secretary defines her work role as the provision of an office service, and not the provision of a personal office service, conflict may well be felt. This is possibly because in the former case the secretary identifies with an individual, and in the latter, with an organisation. This possible difference in identification was not tested in the present study, but if such a difference were found to exist, it would provide one explanation for the dissatisfaction with their role which was felt by many secretaries. Other explanations

are clear. Some secretaries resent that because they are women they lack promotion prospects, have to carry out menial tasks, and are given little responsibility.

### Men secretaries

In the future men may be attracted back to the occupation of secretary; the effect of this might well be to inhibit further the promotion of women. Where an occupation has both men and women members, it is commonly found that the highly-paid senior jobs tend to be filled by men and the more numerous junior jobs by women, even where women form the bulk of workers within an occupation. This is true, for instance, of teaching and social work. It is therefore perhaps in the interests of secretaries to keep the occupation female, in order to prevent the best office jobs being allotted to men.

Before the Second World War, when there were more male secretaries than there are now, the marked difference in their relative status occasioned protest. Daisy Lansbury, who acted as a secretary to her father, George Lansbury, stated that 'there are many private secretaries who prefer not to confess to a knowledge of shorthand and typewriting. Many of them certainly cannot do either, and would consider it beneath their dignity to do so; ... He is usually a man, and almost invariably has an efficient, clear-headed, underpaid shorthand typist at his disposal, who corrects his English and spelling, keeps his and his employer's diaries ... and in general does his work for him. He is able, if required, to write a few well chosen words for



his employers, and is good at being short with unwanted callers. Otherwise he is usually decorative to look at, and has a B.B.C. voice. A woman secretary is expected to be much more practical. She must know how to write shorthand and to use a typewriter ....' 30

Two of the establishments approached in the present survey employed men secretaries. One of the two employers said that the reason he employed men was because he knew they would stay in their jobs. These establishments did not take part in the survey proper; however, three men secretaries working for one organisation (a trade union) did complete questionnaires, leaving out those questions which were obviously relevant only to women secretaries.

The men secretaries were aged between fifty-five and sixty-two years and all had children with ages ranging from thirteen to thirty years. The men's education had been varied, one attending elementary school, one a secondary modern and a third a grammar school: their training varied too, one having learned shorthand and typing at commercial college, one at technical college and one at school. The latter had given himself practice by using weekly shorthand journals which he studied intensively, in order to improve his skill. For all three, school had been the greatest influence in their decision to become secretaries. Two had been in their present jobs for more than thirty years. They earned no more than women in equivalent jobs although their hours tended to be longer, 8.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Two found their jobs very interesting all the time and the other interesting most of the time: what they particularly liked was the responsibility,

variety and human situations with which they dealt, their relationships with boss and colleagues, the security and being left to work alone. They disliked the salary, rushes and interruptions and 'modern trends that clash with past ideals'. Thus, in general, their replies closely paralleled those received from women secretaries.

One of the men secretaries added that there should be a greater drive towards the use of male secretaries because they were more reliable and conscientious, better timekeepers, more productive, had less time off and wasted less time.

It is quite possible that men secretaries will become more common. As secretarial salaries increase, if demand continues to exceed supply, men will become more attracted to the work. Some employers would certainly choose to have them, especially if they felt about women's work in the same way as the male secretary mentioned above. There are relatively few men secretaries working at the moment because, just as it is difficult for a woman to enter an occupation which has previously been considered a male preserve, so it is difficult for men to enter an occupation which has come to be undertaken almost exclusively by women. In the past salary levels have not been sufficiently rewarding to compensate for the low status accorded to the occupation. There is also the fear, when a man takes a job in what is considered to be a woman's occupation, that he will be considered effeminate. The present climate of opinion, in which roles become more interchangeable between the sexes, will minimise this problem. In addition, if employers were to organise their secretaries' jobs

in such a way as to offer positive career prospects, then men would be even more likely to enter the secretarial ranks.

Women will still appear somewhat preferable to men, in that many enjoy the role of helping other people and often do not seek personal advancement. The entry of Great Britain into the Common Market also means that women with language skills will be needed as secretaries. Finally, if men do re-enter the occupation, the

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Equal Pay Act ought to ensure that male and female secretaries working in the same firm are paid at the same rates. Where only women secretaries are employed, or where they work in small offices, it will be possible for claims for equal pay to be made using as a basis local market rates or rates paid within organisations where job evaluation is employed.

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Government proposals to provide equal opportunities for men

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and women may well lead to an increasing number of men secretaries. It is proposed that job advertisements shall no longer be allowed to specify the sex of the job applicant, which, as was mentioned earlier, ought to put an end to glamour-oriented advertisements. Employment agencies will not be allowed to discriminate in offering vacancies and submitting clients to jobs. It is also proposed to take positive steps to encourage both men and women to adopt occupations which have traditionally been performed by either one or the other.

Although the proposals respond to a deeply-felt need, the repercussions on women secretaries may not be favourable. The effect may be that men tend to get the best jobs and that they, rather than young and attractive women, will become the new status symbols. This in turn would have a dampening effect on



the promotion prospects of women. It could mean that men secretaries would be employed, as they used to be, as trainees for other jobs while women would be employed primarily as shorthand-typists. On the other hand, the status of the whole occupation may rise as a consequence of there being more men secretaries.

#### The effect of marriage and childbearing

Marriage is a more important event in the careers of women than it is for men, since in the majority of homes, it is still the wife who is expected to do the housework, cooking and shopping. Although the situation is gradually changing, with men becoming more home-oriented and giving help to their wives, even women holding highly responsible full-time jobs continue to do the major proportion of the domestic work. Nevertheless, many women carry on working after they marry, leaving only when they have children.

Two-thirds of the secretaries in the London sample were single. This distribution could be a result of the difficulty of combining marriage and domestic responsibilities with work in central London where a considerable amount of time would be taken up in travelling. It is likely that married women would tend to seek work nearer to their homes in order to make their second job easier to cope with.

In order to find out how single secretaries expected marriage to affect their working life, they were asked what action they anticipated taking with respect to their work when they eventually married (Appendix 1, question no.75). The married secretaries

in the sample were asked instead how their work pattern had been affected by their marriage (Appendix 1, question no.77). The two sets of replies are shown in Table XV.4.

Table XV.4                      The anticipated and actual effects  
of marriage among London secretaries

<u>Anticipated</u> (335 single secretaries)		<u>Actual</u> (179 married secretaries)	
	% of single secretaries		% of married secretaries
Would stop work	11	Stopped working	4
Would work until children born	44	Worked until children born	16
Would continue in present job	14	Continued in same job	51
Would do temporary work	4	Did temporary work	2
Would get part-time work	6	Took part-time work	5
Other anticipated effects	1	Other effects	22
Uncertain	20		

Single secretaries anticipated in the main that they would work until their children were born (44 per cent) with a further 14 per cent foreseeing that they would continue in their same jobs. In the event, a much greater proportion (51 per cent) of the secretaries who were married and had remained at work in London continued in their same jobs. Of course, many of those who had changed their jobs on marriage may have moved out of London and would therefore not have been included in the sample. It is not known either, how many secretaries left the labour market when they married. There

does appear, however, to be considerable correspondence between the intentions of single secretaries and the actual practice of those married secretaries who continued working or returned to secretarial work. Marriage in itself did not seem to prompt the majority of women to change their work pattern.

Single secretaries were also asked whether they intended to return to work as secretaries after they had married and had had children. Opinion was fairly evenly divided on this matter, 29 per cent did intend to return to secretarial work, 27 per cent did not intend to return to it and the rest were not prepared to commit themselves at this stage. Secretaries who answered 'no' may have been indicating that they were not intending to work at all after they had children, or that they thought secretarial work was impossible to combine with a family. The ages of members of IQPS and NAPS are reflected in their replies to these questions; 29 per cent of IQPS and 17 per cent of NAPS members would work until they had children, compared with 44 per cent of the London sample. Some members said they were no longer young enough to have a child. Among married secretaries in IQPS and NAPS 48 per cent had continued in the same job when they married. Approximately one-third of the single secretaries in both groups felt they would return to secretarial work after marriage and having a family and another third thought they would not.

Employers were asked whether they were prepared to engage as secretaries, women who were married (Appendix 7, question no.9). Only six employers would not employ a married secretary, giving



as the sole reason that domestic commitments might interfere with the demands of work. Thirteen employers gave a qualified reply, saying that they would be happy to employ them providing that work attendance was unaffected. Three felt that their irregular hours might be too difficult for a married woman to cope with, but providing she was prepared to accept this, they had no objections. 'It's all right provided that she does not have to drop everything at 5.20 to rush home and cook tea. I can't have that. But on the whole married women are more suitable, since they have a certain experience of life and responsibilities. Another advantage of married secretaries is that the boss's wife tends to trust a married woman and that's a consideration that can't be overlooked.'

Several employers positively preferred married secretaries because they were more responsible and often more practical. It was felt that single girls were inclined to have fewer personal responsibilities and would therefore be likely to change jobs more frequently and have a less-committed attitude to their work. Married women were not constantly preoccupied with boyfriends, which could be very annoying in terms of telephone calls and lovers' quarrels.

Some employers saw advantages and disadvantages in both states. Single girls were more likely to change jobs or leave to get married, and yet were more flexible; married secretaries were more settled, but were likely to leave to have children.

Employing a secretary who had children was a more complicated matter, although surprisingly few said they would not employ

secretaries who were mothers (Appendix 7, question no.10). Only twenty employers (9 per cent) felt like this. The reasons they gave were that the job was too demanding and that the risk of sudden absences could not be tolerated or were too disruptive:

'Secretaries with home ties are a damned nuisance. You have to let them go all the time.'

'It's a drawback because they can't really do a full-time job. They have to worry about the builders, their husband, shopping, and if there are children, or even grandchildren, there are always excuses.'

'They are a menace. They may be first class but they seem to have disruptive crises. Teenage kids are all right, providing their husband is not too demanding. I don't mind as long as they don't ask for sudden leave - I can't tolerate that kind of thing.'

It seemed especially important in small offices to have a secretary without children since there was often no other person to take over if the secretary had to be away. Some employers had had experience of mothers making unreliable secretaries and so were reluctant to chance employing a mother again; others felt that home and family must be put first by mothers, while they needed a person who would put work first. Eight employers were only willing, if they were desperate, to employ secretaries who had a child. A few felt that part-time work was more appropriate for a secretary with children - others, that if two candidates presented and one had children and the other did not, the one without children would get the job.

Ninety-nine employers (42 per cent) were unqualified in their willingness to accept secretaries who had home responsibilities; this is most encouraging for secretaries who wish to return to work after having had children. One employer said, 'They come to do a day's work. I never ask if they have children, because it is irrelevant and their own business.' The shortage has probably influenced the acceptance of secretaries who were mothers; to quote one employer, 'We take anyone we can get.'

Seventy-six further employers (35 per cent) qualified their acceptance of secretaries who were mothers by saying they were willing to employ them providing that certain conditions were met. The condition most frequently mentioned was that work would not be continually interrupted owing to the demands of the children. The second was that the children should be of a certain age. This age differed from one employer to another, some felt attendance at school was enough, others specified minimum ages from eleven to fifteen years. Thirdly, they had to feel convinced that arrangements for the care of the children were such that they could be relied upon. 'Divided loyalty' was seen as one of the major obstacles. One employer said that he would not like to have to worry about this - he would feel guilty at needing a secretary who was a mother when her children needed her too.

Some employers who already had secretaries with children were very satisfied with their work records:

'One of my secretaries has three children and it works out very well.'



'It's the person and the work that counts - I have had secretaries with children who are more keen because they need the money and therefore do a better job than others. Home life is immaterial as long as the job is done properly.'

'I had a magnificent secretary who left when she was expecting her first child. She came back when her youngest was fifteen.'

'I find that a secretary with kids is very mature and helpful in this type of organisation.' (charitable institution)

'My experience is that this has no effect on performance or attendance. If the secretary has a good ego drive and is involved in the business, then it is not important. My secretary has children and has recently had some time off - but it is the first occasion for thirteen years.'

'Frankly, I am looking forward to the day when we are rich enough to run a crèche, because the best ones are the ones who leave to have children and I would love to have them back. I would encourage more if it were practical, because I really need them.'

'All my secretaries have children. It's a case of weighing one element against another. There is a problem at holiday times and then I have to have these awful girls from agencies, but it's worth it to keep the good ones for forty weeks of the year.'

This general acceptance of married secretaries and of those with children, is confirmed by the age which employers said they would ideally like their secretaries to be (Appendix 7, question no.11). Despite the impression many secretaries had

regarding the age they believed employers would ideally prefer, eighty-two (32 per cent) employers had no particular feelings about the age of their secretaries. As one employer commented, 'Charm and competence are ageless.' A further twenty indicated that any preferred age would depend on the circumstances. For instance, one firm considered that what was most important was that all the secretaries should be the same age as each other, whatever that might be. In large organisations, each boss might have a particular preference. Others said that the secretary of the most senior executive should be older than secretaries of more junior executives or that a secretary should be younger than the person for whom she was working. This latter criterion was mentioned quite often, 'It would terrify me to death to have an older secretary' said one employer. An explanation might lie in the fact that a man likes to regard his secretary as his junior, which she is, and that an older secretary makes him or her feel less authoritative and less senior. Socially it may be difficult for a man to feel he can give orders to an older woman with the same freedom he could to a younger person, which is likely to be a reflection of the different role behaviour that operates when members of different sexes interact. A further explanation is that older women may be associated in the employer's mind with mother-figures who are usually sources of respect in our society, and so men may feel less able to treat them as subordinate members of staff.

Of the employers who preferred their secretaries to be of some particular age, the greatest number selected older secretaries in preference to younger ones. Only thirteen employers said that

they preferred their secretaries to be young, while fifteen more gave twenty to twenty-three years as the lower limit at which they liked to employ secretarial staff. <sup>Fifty-eight</sup> ~~A far greater number~~ positively preferred middle-aged or 'mature' women, or secretaries with a minimum age of twenty-five. Ten employers would only accept secretaries who were over thirty years of age, and three would only accept them over forty. They were far more ready to express their age-preferences in terms of a minimum age than in terms of a maximum age, because they had learned to avoid those with highest turnover rates and least experience. Where young secretaries were preferred, employers gave as their reasons primarily that the company was young (although for a few there was in addition a sexual element involved):

'We like them young, because we are young. We like good looks and we like a good person. It helps, especially at the Christmas period. It makes life different altogether. She ought to be a rival to one's wife.'

'We prefer them young, because we are a young organisation. Most people working here are young.'

'I want young brains for a young business - appearances count very much here - we need "young chicks".'

Other reasons for preferring youth were that they might be more flexible in their attitudes and not 'set in their ways'; they could be moulded into the firm's particular working practices. Young secretaries were said to be more willing to work for more than one person and they were cheaper to employ. Older secretaries were said to be inclined to tell their bosses what they had done in their previous jobs, to get possessive, to be less willing to do certain jobs, and to tend to run their bosses rather than the



other way around. One employer was fearful of employing an older woman because the job 'became their whole life.' Why this should be a handicap is not clear.

Most employers actually preferred older secretaries:

'I prefer not to start a new secretary under the mid or late twenties because they are more settled then. Younger ones move around a lot, although I don't blame them for that. If you want continuity, don't employ a young one.'

'A mature secretary is much better to deal with confidential information and to be relied upon not to gossip.'

'For this job I need a minimum age where she has had enough experience and savoir faire to deal with difficult situations and people when I am not there, and to take responsibility. I am away for ten days every month. She should be at the very least twenty-five, and there is no upper limit. An older woman can cope with being on her own more easily, whereas younger people want company.'

'Older secretaries are a different animal. My present one is fifty-six. They are much better due to the fact that attitudes have changed. Standards of training have declined, performance has declined, a sense of responsibility has declined. They don't identify with their jobs any more and they don't value them because they can get another one in their lunch hour.'

One personnel officer stated sadly, 'If it were up to me I would have none but older women of forty to fifty who are more reliable, experienced and mature, but unfortunately it doesn't matter what I have to say to management - most of them prefer

young secretaries. I keep trying older women, but they are always rejected. The men themselves are thirty to fortyish.' (on the criterion that some men feel a secretary should be younger than they are, as the employer gets older so the acceptable age of the secretary should rise.)

It seems, therefore, contrary to some other findings where employers have felt married women were not reliable as employees,<sup>35</sup> that employers of married secretaries and of secretaries with children, did not consider them to be second-rate workers; instead they rated them among the best. It also suggests that although a sexual mythology surrounds the occupation, it counts for little when practical matters are considered.

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## CHAPTER XVI

### EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

Employment agencies for office workers have been in existence for a good many years; as early as 1898 'employment bureaus for women' were listed in a publication written to advise women about potential areas of work.<sup>1</sup> Nowadays there are two types of employment service: a) that offered as a free service by the Government, and b) that provided by private employment agencies who charge either the employer or the employee a fee, usually when a satisfactory job placement has been completed.

While private employment agencies serve many occupational groups, the most rapid growth has been among those concerned with the placement of office staff, with which the majority now deal.<sup>2</sup> It has been estimated that there are approximately 1,600<sup>3</sup> private employment agencies in Great Britain, of which at least half are in London and the Home Counties, almost certainly as a consequence of the relatively high concentration of offices there. Some agencies have a number of branches, one having<sup>4</sup> one hundred and eighty, and four have become public companies. The majority, however, are single-branch establishments, as many<sup>5</sup> of which seem to go out of business each year as enter it. In both the centre and suburbs of London, employment agencies have become part of the usual scene, with branches of competing agencies being found side by side in many main streets. In addition, advertising aimed at secretaries is prominent in the London underground, in newspapers and on hoardings; this invites secretaries to use a particular agency when changing jobs, or to work as a 'temp', that is, a person who is employed by an agency and is sent

to various employers for a temporary job to replace secretaries who are absent, or to help with extra work loads. In the case of permanent staff, the agency acts as an intermediary between employer and employee, whereas temporary office workers are employees of the agency.

The growth in employment agencies catering for office staff has come about both as a result of the increasing demand for office staff (it has been estimated that 100,000 new office jobs are created in England every year)<sup>6</sup> and because of the inadequacy of Government agencies to cater for this section of employment. Government agencies, possibly as a consequence of their dual function of dealing with both employment and unemployment, have tended to concentrate upon manual workers and the unemployed, leaving non-manual and management placements to the private sector. The image of the Labour Exchange is reinforced by the housing of Exchanges in poor buildings sited in back streets with insufficiently trained and expert staff, although the Government is seeking to<sup>7</sup> remedy this situation.

The ease with which employment agencies have been able to set up in business has helped to contribute to their numbers. 'The only physical requirements are a desk, a telephone, and sufficient promotional outlay to make it known.'<sup>8</sup> Licensing laws concerning the establishment of private employment agencies have in the past been at the discretion of the Local Authority; while some had stringent rules which they applied before granting a licence, others did not even require agencies to be licensed. In 1971 only thirty out of one hundred and forty-four Local Authorities required agencies to be licensed.<sup>9</sup> Then a Government Committee recommended that all<sup>10</sup> employment agencies should be licensed and this became law in<sup>11</sup> 1973, so as to give Local Authorities more control over agency activities.



Private employment agencies place both temporary and permanent office staff, but there seems to be an increasing tendency to specialise in the provision of temporary staff only. Placing temporary staff accounts for a considerable proportion of the turnover of large agencies and is their most profitable source of income.<sup>12</sup> The correspondence function performed by secretaries is vital to the operation of most establishments, consequently when a secretary is on holiday, absent through sickness, or has left and not been replaced, her position has to be filled quickly. Agencies, or bureaux, as they are sometimes called, provide a service which enables missing secretarial staff to be replaced at relatively short notice.

In 1968 it was estimated that between 2 and 4 per cent (approximately 41,000) of all office staff in the Greater London Council area were temporary staff, and that three-quarters of all assignments for temporary staff lasted less than six weeks.<sup>13</sup> The majority of vacancies were filled not by previously permanent staff who had decided to take temporary work for financial inducements or because they had been wooed from their permanent positions, but by those who were unable to work regularly because of social, domestic or educational commitments, and consequently formed a different group from those permanently employed. These conclusions<sup>14</sup> were based on a survey undertaken by the Alfred Marks Bureau, one of the largest employment agencies, which found that the most common reasons temporary workers gave for undertaking the work were, in descending order of priority:

1. They were about to move from the area or go abroad (16%)
2. They could not accept permanent work because of domestic or personal commitments (13%)
3. They preferred the varied routines of temporary work (11%)
4. They were doing temporary work whilst waiting for permanent work (10%)
5. They were on a working holiday from overseas or elsewhere in the U.K. (10%)

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A survey by another employment agency reported that the reason why most married women did temporary work was to supplement their standard of living - temporary work allowed them to find work when they wanted it; moreover, it enabled them to keep in practice and to feel less cut off from the world of business. Many mothers were able to work during the school term and not during the school holidays, and apparently one-third of those on the books of this agency were 'permanent' temporaries, who worked regularly, possibly in one company, for a limited number of hours. Some younger 'temps' actually preferred this type of work for its variety, for the opportunity to move about more as well as for the diversity of experience they gained.

Secretaries in the present survey, all of whom were full-time employees, were asked whether they had ever done temporary work (Appendix 1, question 22). It was found that half of all the secretaries in the London sample and IQPS (and 45 per cent of NAPS) had at some time undertaken temporary employment, so there is little doubt that temporary work provides a useful service for secretaries at some stage in their careers.

If, as has been maintained, 'temps' are a different population from permanent employees, it might be expected that the reasons given by the present sample for undertaking temporary work would be different from those given by the 'temps' above; this was largely the case (Table XVI.1).

Table XVI.1

The main reasons for London secretaries having done temporary work (n=515)

	% of those who had done temporary work
1. 'Filling in' between permanent jobs	36
2. For experience before taking a permanent job	22
3. Moving or going abroad	10
4. Domestic or personal commitments	7
5. Did not desire permanent employment	6
6. Other reasons	19
	<u>100</u>

That the greatest proportion of temporary work was undertaken between permanent jobs may mean that the existence of temporary employment makes it much easier for secretaries to change their jobs than would otherwise be the case, which may contribute towards turnover rates in the occupation.

Almost three quarters of all employers interviewed in this study had used a private employment agency at some time in order to employ a temporary secretary (Appendix 7, question no.12).

Some were very emphatic in pointing out that a 'temporary secretary' was a misnomer, since they could only employ a temporary shorthand-typist, or typist. It was impossible for a 'temp' to learn anything like enough about the job in the time she was employed, which would enable her to fulfil the work of the secretary she



was replacing. The most common reason for employing a 'temp' was to fill in during holidays (fifty-nine employers), absence due to sickness (thirty-five), filling in while jobs remained vacant (twenty-seven) and to deal with increased work loads or special rush jobs (twenty-three). The National Board for  
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Prices and Incomes found in 1968 that very few employers used temporary staff in order to meet peak work loads, so this latter finding may indicate a recent change in the use of temporary staff, one which has been recommended to employers as an aid to the  
17  
deployment of labour.

Of the employers who did not use 'temps' some had no need to do so during holidays or other absences because other staff did the absentees' work. Some had private arrangements whereby an individual known to the employer (often a former employee who had left to marry or have children) was willing to work for occasional periods. A few firms organised temporary systems of their own, either by employing full-time a person who could stand in for any secretary who was absent and help at peak times in different departments, or, if they were a large enough organisation they used staff from the typing pool. Others employed part-timers as 'temps' to stand in when necessary. Several organisations did not use temporary staff from agencies at all, because their experience with them had been so poor that they preferred to manage without.

Criticism of private employment agencies has centred around  
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a number of issues. Among other things they have been accused of:

1. Charging excessive fees to employers for the placing of permanent and temporary office staff.

2. Supplying job applicants whose quality has been too low.
3. Encouraging turnover among staff by a particular type of advertising and by the questionable practice of offering alternative jobs to employees whom they have already placed.
4. Encouraging 'salary drift' by bidding up the general level of salaries by charging a percentage of the annual salary of the employee as a fee.
5. Producing a uniformity of salary which does not vary sufficiently with the quality of job applicant.

Employers in the present study tended to emphasise these same defects about the placement of both temporary and permanent staff. Among the one hundred and sixty-five employers who had used temporary secretaries, only 20 per cent were satisfied with the service they received. A further 15 per cent had mixed feelings, in that they had had both good and bad experiences, but the rest (65 per cent) were unreservedly dissatisfied with the service they had received from employment agencies.

Those who were satisfied had managed to find particular agencies upon whom they felt they could rely and who provided a good service:

'I meet them so that they have an exact job specification, and if I pay more I get better people.'

'Girls tend to be fairly good and provided at short notice, which is very important. I have had one or two duds, but I am fairly happy with their service.'

'I use 'temps' for rushes and crises. There is often a lot of work on Fridays which has to be done quickly, so they just come for the day and it is much cheaper than employing regular staff. I am very pleased with agency

service - I have the same "temp" girl all the time and it works very well.'

'I sometimes get a better "temp" than my secretary, which can be very annoying.'

Some employers named the agencies which they thought to be superior to others; however, contradictory reports about the same agency often occurred.

Two employers remarked that using temporary secretaries was a good way of finding a permanent secretary, as occasionally 'temps' chose to stay. This must be in the minds of many 'temps', particularly those who are in-between permanent jobs, as it is a reasonable way of discovering whether they would like to work for a particular organisation or person, without committing themselves beforehand.

From the rest of the employers, the hostility felt towards agencies was considerable, whether it concerned temporary workers or the placement of permanent staff, and their criticisms reflected those mentioned above. The main source of dissatisfaction was in the quality of the temporary staff, many of whom were said to be inadequate, and indeed, if many of them have never worked before, or only work for a few weeks in the summer, this is hardly surprising (Table XVI.1). The situation was considered by employers to be entirely the fault of the agencies who were assumed not to test their applicants otherwise they presumably would not have sent them out, or else they chose to overlook standards. Even where agencies took detailed particulars of the requirements of the employer they were often said to supply staff



both permanent and temporary, who in no way fulfilled the needs specified. In addition it was claimed that temporary staff were changed frequently so that any training which may have been given, say at the beginning of the week, was wasted:

'We need a "temp" who will work all through the two-week period. Sometimes though the girls change several times during this period and each time the new one has to be taught. This is very uneconomical and is not only annoying for us but difficult for the "temp" as well.'

It was also said that girls who would otherwise be in permanent work were encouraged to undertake temporary employment in the summer, thus stimulating turnover, reducing the market for permanent employees and forcing up salaries through increased demand:

'They foster the idea of the "temp" because of the profit they can make, and week after week they get this "rent" from the girls.'

Such a situation, as the National Board for Prices and Incomes<sup>19</sup> pointed out, would be beneficial to the agency since they took a proportion of the salary earned by the temporary worker rather than a straight fee. However, if, as the Alfred Marks Bureau has maintained, temporary staff come from a different population than permanent employees, this accusation is unjustified.

Two employers reported having had their secretaries coaxed from them by offers of other jobs, even though an agency fee had been paid:

'An agency offered my last secretary a better job so she left. Obviously that job didn't please her and when I tried to fill the vacant position she had left, they offered her back to me at £10 a week more.'

An employer who was very much concerned with the training of secretaries said she once tested an agency for its efficiency. She pretended to apply for a job herself and gave the agency certain particulars about her qualifications and experience and the kind of job she would like. Some time afterwards her husband telephoned the agency saying that he needed a secretary and giving as his requirements the same list of qualifications and so on that his wife had already submitted, but the two were never matched. This may in part explain her feelings about agencies:

'They are an unnecessary parasitical service which should not be allowed. They are absolutely useless, both the private and the State ones. I think they are criminal.'

Several employers said that private employment agencies were to blame for the fact that the title 'secretary' had become devalued. It was said that if an employer rang up an agency and stated that a position was vacant for a shorthand-typist, they were told no-one would apply, since all shorthand-typists liked to be called secretaries. Employers felt, reluctantly, that they had to go

along with this situation although they considered it was a deception played on them by the agencies since secretaries were paid more than shorthand-typists and consequently the agencies would earn more by the practice. The agencies, however, may have only been responding to the increased demands and expectations of the shorthand-typists themselves.

To see whether any clue could be obtained about agency intervention in the matter of titles, a comparison was made of agency and private advertisements for secretaries appearing in the London Evening Standard (as The Times carried very few advertisements for shorthand-typists, it was not included in this analysis as had been done in Chapter VII.) Table XVI.2 shows the number of advertisements for shorthand-typists and secretaries which appeared on one set day of the year between the years 1950 and 1970. The method of selecting these advertisements was previously described in Chapter VII.

Table XVI.2 Advertisements appearing in the Evening Standard for shorthand-typists and secretaries, 1950 - 1970

	Total no. of ads. for:			No. of ads. placed by private employers			No. of ads. placed by employment agencies		
	sh/ty	secs	Total	sh/ty	secs	Total	sh/ty	secs	Total
1950	7	1	8	5	-	5	2	1	3
1955	40	17	57	38	12	50	2	5	7
1960	49	69	118	44	60	104	5	9	14
1965	50	99	149	45	63	108	5	36	41
1970	53	207	260	27	57	84	26	150	176



Table XVI.2 shows three major trends which were described earlier in Chapter VII. These are the increase in the total number of advertisements, the increase in the proportion of advertisements for secretaries as opposed to shorthand-typists, and the increase in the number and proportion of advertisements placed by employment agencies, as opposed to private advertisers.

In 1950 and 1955, the total number of advertisements for shorthand-typists outweighed those for secretaries, but by 1960 the position was reversed. Between 1950 and 1970 the total number of advertisements for shorthand-typists remained relatively stable while those for secretaries tripled. Both employers and employment agencies were advertising more jobs for secretaries than for shorthand-typists. Although in 1965 agency advertisements for secretaries considerably outnumbered those for shorthand-typists, this may simply have meant, with the comparatively low number of advertisements, that they chose to advertise only jobs for secretaries, and not that they were now calling shorthand-typist jobs, secretarial. In 1970, secretarial advertisements placed by private employers outweighed those for shorthand-typists by just over two-to-one, whereas the greatly increased number of secretarial advertisements placed by agencies outweighed those for shorthand-typists by almost six-to-one. Agencies, more than employers, may have been advertising only jobs for secretaries, or alternatively, tending to call shorthand-typists' jobs, secretarial.

The analysis of advertisements, therefore, does not provide conclusive evidence that agencies deliberately led the way in devaluing the term 'secretary', although such a devaluation has

undoubtedly occurred. The change in emphasis in advertisements could, however, simply reflect a real increase in demand for secretaries.

From the 'horror stories' and vociferous complaints made by employers, it would not be unreasonable to assume that the desperate demand situation has attracted into the labour market itinerant individuals who normally might be considered unemployable, or unstable, and that because agencies have as much trouble as anyone else in attracting staff, they have lowered their standard of acceptance. Another explanation for the dissatisfaction with agencies might be that smaller agencies, many of whom go out of business, may have little regard for ethics, and have simply jumped on to the bandwagon hoping to profit from the situation. However, responsible agencies themselves claim that employers prefer to have them provide someone with less skills or experience than no-one at all.

In defence of the employment agencies, among the various official reports on their operations, none has found the case against agencies to be proven, although it has been admitted in these reports that defects occur. It has been pointed out in an editorial article as an explanation for employer dissatisfaction with the provision of temporary staff, that a 'temp' goes into an office when the situation is disturbed and disrupted due to absences, holidays, abnormal pressure of work and so on, and she may consequently bear the brunt of expressions of frustration on the part of the employer. <sup>20</sup>

The Employment Agents Federation of Great Britain was established in 1963, and approximately one-third of agencies are said to be members <sup>21</sup> (accounting for 80 per cent of all agency business).

The Federation laid down a list of Rules and Code of Conduct in order to preserve certain standards. Among their rules it is stated, 'Members and Associates must not be guilty of conduct prejudicial to, or likely to bring discredit upon, the prestige and good reputation of the Federation, nor of the employment agency business generally.' The Rules and Code of Conduct also state that 'Members and Associates shall take reasonable steps to ensure that only those applicants for employment whose experience is suitable for a specific vacancy are submitted to an employer having that vacancy, and shall not submit any employee applicant to any prospective employer whom they have reason to believe is unsuitable.' Also, 'Agency principals and their staff shall interview thoroughly in order to avoid submitting unsuitable applicants to employers and shall not submit to a prospective employer any employee whom they have reason to believe is unsuitable.' These rules apply to the placing of permanent staff and similar ones are laid down for placing temporary staff.

Either employers are unaware that complaints about member agencies can be forwarded to the Federation or they do not know about the Federation itself (employers were not asked whether they had heard of the Federation). They may also be sceptical of any complaint being fairly investigated. The only defensive action which had been taken by employers in the survey was not to pay bills for unsatisfactory service, and two had taken legal action in support of their refusal to pay. One employer who claimed that a temporary had taken five days to do one day's work eventually received a credit after six months. Agencies do not charge a fee



to employers if a permanent employee does not stay in a job for  
a specified length of time (about ten to twelve weeks)<sup>23</sup> and credits  
are subsequently made to employers when an employee leaves within  
this period. Such credits or refunds account for one-fifth of  
all invoices submitted by agencies to employers.<sup>24</sup>

It must be assumed that the more responsible agencies themselves deplore low standards, if they are not being exceedingly shortsighted, because by promoting marginal employees, even for temporary work, they are inevitably contracting the market for their own services. High charges combined with low standards must mean in the long run that employers will try to avoid using them, and several companies in this survey had determined never to use an employment agency again:

'I don't use temps any more, they are not worth the time and trouble. Agencies take you for a ride most of the time. We asked for someone really good and they sent in a girl who could barely type and then sent in a bill. So I tore it up. If you get staff through them they try as hard as possible to push up the wages. I think the situation is changing though, and it is not going to be so easy for the agencies and their girls any more, because we are trying to cut costs.'

'I use a 'temp' from an agency if I am absolutely desperate, but I would rather work twice as long myself than get one. I loathe agencies. Even (well known agency) send bad people. There is little to choose between them.'

This in turn may create its own problems, for an employer outside this survey has stated privately that a Head Office edict saying that no more 'temps' are to be employed by the company has led to a situation where they tend to over-employ permanent staff. If the turnover among young women were not so high, and older women were increasingly employed, then employers would not need to over-react in this way.

There is no doubt that agencies can, and often do, provide a useful service, not only to employers but to employees. <sup>25</sup> Fulop has said that an agency providing temporary office staff fulfils five functions:

1. It provides temporary staff at shorter notice than the employer could do himself.
2. It makes the employer more flexible because he can cover short or long periods, and no longer needs to carry under-employed full-time staff.
3. The continuity of temporary help is provided by an agency until a job is completed.
4. Temporary help should enable the total wages bill to be lower (In the United States temporaries are used as an integral part of the labour force, enabling employers to operate with fewer permanent staff).
5. It helps to increase the total labour force.

The advantages of using agencies rather than direct advertising for recruiting permanent staff are; a firm pays the full fee of the agency only when the new employee has completed a specified number of weeks of employment; recruitment by advertisement means more work for both the employer and employee since an applicant may find it necessary to answer numerous

advertisements in order to get interviews with two or three firms; the employer in his turn may have to sift through dozens of applications of which only one or two are suitable. <sup>26</sup> It has been estimated that the introduction costs of agencies vary between 1 $\frac{1}{4}$  and 10 per cent of an employee's annual salary, whereas the average cost of filling a vacancy by advertising is <sup>27</sup> 15 per cent of the annual salary. Also, a disadvantage of newspaper advertising is that the cost of the advertisement must be incurred in advance; and even when an advertisement is successful, if the new employee leaves after two or three weeks the firm may need to re-advertise. With an employment agency, on the other hand, a firm pays the full fees of the agency only when the new employee has been in employment for more than approximately ten weeks.

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Fulop stated, 'The raison d'etre of private employment agencies, the reason why employers are willing to pay them a fee rather than undertake the work themselves or use an alternative method of recruitment, is that they are quicker, more effective and time-saving. For the employee, too, the agency often offers a more varied selection of posts than he (she) is likely to discover for himself, eliminates the chore of replying to advertisements, avoids applying for posts that have already been filled, and enables him to find one more quickly.'

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The National Board for Prices and Incomes found in general that charges made by agencies for placing temporary staff were not excessive in view of the fact that no fringe benefits were



paid by the employer such as sick pay or holiday pay, which were given to permanent staff. However, the practice of charging a percentage of the salary of the staff placed might have an inflationary effect, since by inflating the salary paid to an employee, agencies in turn would inflate their own earnings. The Report suggested that a straight fee would not be an unreasonable solution to this problem. They also felt that employers could in any case use their own staff more effectively to cover absences, instead of adding temporary staff.

Fulop also maintained that there was little evidence to show that agencies raised salaries. <sup>30</sup> Whereas the 'average hourly earnings of a temporary secretary in Central London increased by 15 per cent between 1965 and 1968, the increase in rates of pay for all grades of staff in the G.L.C. area was about 30 per cent between 1964 and 1968.' The regularly increasing demand for office staff was being imposed on a relatively static labour force, because of the widening scope of job opportunities for girls, and earlier marriage. Employment agencies might be able to alleviate the situation - they were never likely to solve it.

The National Board for Prices and Incomes reported that approximately half of the employers in their survey were dissatisfied with the service of agencies. In the present study two-thirds were dissatisfied, no doubt because in central London the supply problem is more acute. Several employers were incensed at the Report because it found that charges for temporary staff were not excessive. They possibly felt this way because the Report

ignored the fact that temporary staff were usually not an adequate replacement for absent permanent staff, although charges were investigated on that basis. If the temporary worker was not a true replacement, the cost to the employer in terms of output was considerably higher than if the temporary worker was a real substitute. Passion was also aroused because of the profits the large employment agencies have been seen to make, and employers felt advantage was being taken of their vulnerability.

The Report also suggested that the Government could play a larger and more effective role in the placement of office staff through a State employment service. This advice has been taken, and establishments were opened in London and Manchester which were modelled on the private-sector agencies and which make no charge to employers. Richard M. Jones has examined, in economic terms, this move by the Government to set up in competition with the private sector, and claimed that the move was unjustified.<sup>31</sup> He found that the Department of Employment agency in Manchester was successfully competing with private agencies, but that instead of the costs being borne by the employer, they were being borne by the taxpayer, so those who benefited were the employers since in neither case did employees have to pay a fee. He concluded, therefore, that the expansion by the Department of Employment was controversial and may in fact discourage employers from improving their labour utilisation. Jones also maintained that the charges laid against agencies were unfounded and that the accusation that they encouraged turnover could not be dissociated from the age/sex structure of the office labour force which, he claims, is traditionally mobile and impermanent.

The existence of competing Government agencies may, however, act as a brake to excessive rates being charged by agencies. <sup>32</sup>

It should also, perhaps, be recognised that the presence of the new-style Department of Employment agencies represents a debt which the Government owes to the private sector, for the private agency has taught the Government how to improve its own employment service to the community.

Although agencies have not been found guilty of raising salaries, they do have the potential to do so. It has been pointed out that the publication by agencies of surveys of salaries may have an inflationary effect since the surveys encourage employers to pay rates above the average so as to keep ahead of the market, and large organisations in particular use such surveys to determine rates of pay for their staff. <sup>33</sup> Since large organisations employ half or more of all secretaries in central London and agencies supply them with their secretarial staff, the actions of large organisations will have a positive effect upon the total supply and pay situations. Also by advertising in newspapers only the highest-paid jobs, a false impression may be created of average earnings. It must be said, however, that a comparison between newspaper advertisements for secretaries in which salaries were quoted, and the pay of secretaries in the present sample in 1970, showed that advertisements were a reasonable reflection of the actual pay structure, that is, they did not advertise only highly-paid jobs.



Agencies are guilty, however, of creating through advertising an impression of secretaries as irresponsible and flippant workers interested only in glamour and pay. In this context, many secretaries complained about agencies for lowering the reputation of the secretarial occupation generally. Although the Rules and Code of Conduct for agencies states that their behaviour shall not be prejudicial to the image of agencies, they do not say that advertising should not be prejudicial to the image of employees.

Secretaries in this study were found to like responsibility and interesting work, good pay, promotion prospects and to be kept busy (Chapter XII); employers wanted older, stable, intelligent, skilled secretaries (Chapter X). These needs do not seem to be incompatible. Some agency advertising gives the impression that secretaries want frequent mobility and glamour supported by good pay, and that employers want the same thing. There are signs that employer animosity is beginning to affect agency policy and advertisements are ceasing to encourage an irresponsible image. An early example of a resented employment agency advertisement, 'Be lucky go happy' (suggesting be happy-go-lucky) is making way for a more responsible approach which emphasises that agencies find jobs in which secretaries will want to remain.

In any demand situation on the open market, the price of a scarce commodity rises. It is not suggested that agencies create the demand situation, which is due to a combination of circumstances including an increase in demand for office workers generally, increased employment opportunities for women in other fields, early marriage and childbirth, a lowering of the birth rate in

in the 1950s and the raising of the school-leaving age; agencies are, however, in a position to take advantage of the situation, and this is resented by employers.

Much of the blame for the current shortage of secretarial staff can be laid at the feet of employers themselves who, despite an increasing shortage of office staff are reluctant to see the office section of their business in the same economic terms as other parts. Hence they are slow to adopt mechanisation<sup>34</sup> and to utilize their office labour effectively. It is indeed a paradox that while the shortage of secretaries is so acute, some secretaries complained of underemployment, and others had left jobs for this reason. Relatively few employers seem to be attempting to attract women part-time employees, although many secretaries are under-employed. It must be assumed that the luxury of a secretary in terms of service, status and role satisfaction is one which employers are reluctant to give up.

This study found a greater extent of employer dissatisfaction with agencies than other reports have done. The discrepancy may arise partly from the present sample of employers being concentrated in central London, and partly from the random nature of the sample which included establishments of all types and size. The majority of these establishments were found to employ only one secretary, although approximately half of all secretaries were employed by large organisations. Small organisations are likely to feel the cost of secretarial services more acutely than do large organisations

and are also likely to be more critically dependent on secretaries than are larger organisations. Their criticisms therefore would be likely to be more numerous and outweigh their employment power in the market. In other words, ten establishments employing one secretary each might express ten times the amount of criticism made by one employer with fifty secretaries (although, of course, that one employer might represent the views of fifty bosses within one company). Employment agencies supply considerably more secretaries to large than to small organisations, sometimes on a contract basis, where different secretarial abilities can be fitted into the organisation's structure more satisfactorily. It has been stated that agencies supply office staff to 86 per cent of the 'top 10,000 firms.'<sup>35</sup>

The difference between this random sample of all central London employers, and employers catered-to by agencies, may offer an explanation of why it is that employment agencies consistently<sup>36</sup> report that employers are not interested in older secretaries and yet employers in this investigation actually preferred older secretaries. Agencies catering for large organisations are more likely to come across situations where junior executives are allotted secretaries as a status symbol, and hence the executives are more likely to want them to be young.

Various ways in which the situation might be improved have<sup>37</sup> been put forward, in particular by Christina Fulop, who has made a number of sensible and practical recommendations concerning both employment agencies and employers. Some of her recommendations have already been adopted. She proposed an increased control



over agency activities by both voluntary and legal means;  
comprehensive licensing of agencies (The Employment Agencies  
38  
Bill, 1973, dealt with this), the improvement of State employment  
agencies with the possibility of charges being made to employers  
in certain circumstances. Employers should be more forthcoming  
when complaints are made concerning agencies; they should  
'shop around' to find agencies who make the most reasonable  
charges; they should provide more detailed job descriptions and  
use staff more efficiently, while at the same time improving  
job satisfaction for their office employees. They could also  
make internal arrangements to provide cover for holidays, peak  
work periods and sickness, by using part-time staff.

Greater cooperation and agreement between agencies,  
employers and secretaries might alleviate many of the current  
problems. At present, employers blame agencies for sending out  
inadequate staff, while agencies blame employers for being willing  
to accept them. Employment agencies will only be able to  
provide a satisfactory service if the supply and demand situations  
are more evenly balanced. Recommendations are made in Chapter XVII  
which it is hoped will contribute towards this end.

It is probable in any case that the private agencies have  
now exploited as fully as they can the market potential for the  
placement of office staff; the agencies' operations are now growing  
by catering for other occupational groups, and by expansion abroad.  
This may lead to the secretary situation becoming more settled

and its worst problems being ameliorated, since constant service rather than quick expansion will be required for private employment agencies to continue to flourish.

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## CHAPTER XVII

### DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### How the present position of secretaries has come about

In Chapter I it was shown how today the predominance of women in clerical, and particularly secretarial, occupations may be explained in part by historical circumstances. The excess of single women in the population in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries led to a demand for employment from middle class women who hitherto had worked only in the home. These women felt constrained to take up work which was suitable in terms of its social status. Office work was acceptable in this respect since it required a certain standard of literacy at a time when education, especially for women, was a scarce resource. Women's presence in offices was probably accepted by men clerical workers because the invention and adoption of new technology such as telegraphy and the typewriter led to new occupations which did not appear to threaten established employment, and in any case, male clerks were not organised into unions and so had no power to resist the influx of women. Employers accepted female clerical workers because women were prepared to accept much lower pay than their male counterparts. Furthermore, women's acceptance occurred at a time when there was a general increase in demand for clerical workers, a movement for political and economic reform on behalf of women and an improvement in women's education.

The movement from clerical to secretarial work by a proportion of women was probably due to a number of different developments. There was a continuing increase in the numbers employed in offices at all levels (Chapter I), hence there was an increase in demand for office secretaries. As correspondence, a traditional task of a secretary, came to be carried out on a typewriter rather than by hand, women - who were the only people who operated typewriters - were well placed to do the correspondence part of a secretary's job. Secretarial work offered a good opportunity for upward mobility from more routine clerical work and it also seemed to offer further opportunities for upward mobility out of secretarial work. As more women adopted secretarial work, it became less attractive to men, who sought upward mobility by other means. In addition, as was shown in Chapter I, it had been women of the middle class who first adopted clerical work and they resented the encroachment of women with lower social class origins and education who might diminish the general standing of the work. As the secretary's job had the highest status among the clerical occupations by virtue of its close association with persons of standing, its adoption by middle class women would fulfil the need of maintaining their status.

As far as can be ascertained, before the expansion in office employment secretaries were employed by private individuals often as general assistants. The growth of office employment led to more secretaries being employed in an office setting helping individuals who were themselves employed. This shift in employment circumstances has probably led to a change in the needs of the employer.



As women came to dominate the occupation, it increasingly came to be regarded as women's work. It is not only by virtue of numbers that this attitude prevails; there are certain features of the job which fit well with the traditional role of women in society (Chapter XV).

The origins of some of today's problems for the secretarial occupation lie in these historical events. Indeed there are certain striking similarities between today's situation and that which existed in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Then, as now, there was a fear that the status of the occupation was falling owing to the influx of less-skilled workers, which probably prompted a movement from clerical to secretarial work. Today, a similar fear prompts a demand for movement from secretarial to managerial work. Then as now, the demands are taking place at a time when equal opportunities for women are receiving considerable attention. But whereas in the nineteenth century the typewriter was seen as an invention which offered new opportunities to women, now it is frequently seen as an instrument which limits opportunities.

The occupation of 'secretary' is sufficiently clearly recognised in everyday usage. For that reason it was decided that the practical definition for the purposes of the research (p.52) was 'anyone who is called a secretary by the person who employs her'. The research itself

was designed to bring out what secretaries actually did. This was reported in Chapter X. It is evident how diverse are the activities of secretaries and there is no one function, not even shorthand or typing, which is common to them all without exception. If one attempt in the light of the findings to summarize the syndrome which identifies 'the secretary' the main characteristic features can be described as the provision of a general office service to one or a few persons and the possession of a special skill in correspondence.

#### Problems of secretarial employment

From these historical developments and from the research in the present study carried out among secretaries, certain major problem areas can be identified, some of which are interdependent.

These are:

1. There are insufficient promotion prospects for secretaries.
2. Training for secretaries is often too limited.
3. The age structure of the secretarial work force is unbalanced.
4. There is insufficient differentiation in jobs and in secretarial abilities.

These issues are discussed below.

1. There are insufficient promotion prospects for secretaries.

Chapter XIII showed that most secretaries felt they had no opportunity for promotion in their present jobs although many respondents knew secretaries who had achieved promotion elsewhere. Promotion for secretaries may be viewed on the one hand as working for persons of increasingly higher status, or, on the other, as moving from secretarial to administrative, managerial, or other kinds of work.

A secretary's position usually reflects the status of the person for whom she works. The attachment by a secretary to an individual has been shown to limit promotion prospects for secretaries (Chapter XIII). Not only is it possible for a young secretary to become a secretary to a high-status individual, thus ending at a very early stage any possible promotion in terms of her boss's status, but it enables employers to put secretaries on a promotion ladder completely different from that of other employees, thus limiting their advancement structurally. If employers were to regard secretaries as being in an apprenticeship or trainee situation, just as men secretaries used to be, and secretaries were incorporated into the organisational structure rather than attached to individuals within the occupational hierarchy, this problem would in part be overcome. Ideally, secretaries working in organisations ought to be able to advance in either of two directions: in the traditional way, that is by attachment to increasingly higher-status individuals, or by stepping sideways into the actual structure of the organisation



itself, as they are at present able to do in the Civil Service. Obviously, such promotion prospects are more possible in large rather than small organisations, and in some kinds of industry more than others. Where professional expertise is a necessary prerequisite to advancement, there are obvious limitations to promotion. However, even in these circumstances there are promotion possibilities which could be considered. For instance, in the legal profession, secretaries with appropriate training could do the work which is often undertaken by Articled Clerks, and have the possibility of becoming Managing Clerks: in Universities, secretaries could be considered for training in administrative work such as that which is undertaken by the Registrar's Department or careers service. In a business setting, more lines of advancement are possible except where professional limitations occur.

Unless such promotion prospects are offered by employers, able women will find the occupation unsatisfying (Chapter XIII); they will either leave it, or fail to be attracted to it in the first place.

## 2. Training for secretaries is often too limited.

An increasing emphasis has been laid upon correspondence tasks by employers, and training institutions as a reflection of this need, have tended to emphasise shorthand and typing speeds as a first requirement of a secretarial training. This is sometimes reinforced by employers who pay more for secretaries who have attained high speeds. However, these skills are very often a wasted investment. Employers cannot be expected to dictate very fast as they need time to consider what they are saying; consequently, without practice, the secretary loses her

high speed. Typewriting is a valuable skill, but shorthand is in doubt as a necessary skill for secretaries, although it can be a very useful asset at times. Rather than teach secretaries to attain high speeds in shorthand, they should be trained how to write letters, summaries and reports; to take Minutes at meetings, not verbatim in shorthand but by extracting the sense of what is said; to have a knowledge of economics, finance and banking and general business procedures. In other words, a secretarial training should be a general business training with a special emphasis on office and correspondence skills.

If the direction of secretarial training were changed, certain other problems would be solved. One of these problems is that the majority of secretaries are young and therefore lack work experience (Chapter IV); training has to compensate for this lack of experience. Knowledge which was formerly gained over the course of a lengthy career has to be acquired before beginning work as a secretary; a more comprehensive basic training would provide this. A second problem is that a training which emphasises primarily shorthand and typewriting does not prepare secretaries for any career to which they may aspire. At present, if a secretary in an organisation wishes to apply for a different kind of position, her secretarial training is thought to be of little value; she often has to retrain in a completely different sphere if she wishes to advance, in which case she will have lost several valuable years.

If secretarial studies could be incorporated into a structure such as the National Awards in Business Studies which offers qualifications including the Certificate and Higher Certificate in Office Studies, the Ordinary National Certificate and Diploma and the Higher National Certificate and Diploma, then secretaries would have gone a considerable way towards achieving public recognition of their skills. For instead of having a secretarial qualification, which is often assumed to consist simply of shorthand and typewriting, she would have a generally-recognised business qualification. It should be possible to attain such qualifications on either a part-time, full-time or day release basis. The British Association for Commercial and Industrial Education (BACIE) has recently been investigating the question of administrative and clerical examinations, and three proposals in particular which it has put forward seem valuable. Firstly, it is proposed there should be comparability of standards between qualifications such as GCE 'O' and 'A' levels, RSA examinations, and ONC/D, so that they become real equivalents. This would considerably simplify different entry methods. Secondly, it is proposed that the ONC and OND qualifications could be achieved by a system of accumulated credits in single subjects. If this proposal were to be adopted, it would enable training institutions to provide a means of gaining some credits at least towards a business qualification, which, if she so desired, a student might continue to acquire after she has left the training institution. BACIE also suggested that, subject to appropriate safeguards and regulations, credits could be given for proven work experience. These two latter proposals



of accumulated credits and work experience would be of great help to secretaries. It is often only after a woman has entered an occupation which is less demanding than she would have chosen had she been a man, that she realises that she has underestimated her ability; it should be made easier for such women to rectify their early diffidence by putting their ability to some long-term purpose. Giving credit for experience should make it easier for older secretaries and women returning to secretarial work after a period of absence, to gain further qualifications.

One particular deficiency in English secretarial training is that there is inadequate provision for a full-time course which combines business studies and secretarial studies. It might therefore be valuable to institute more two-year full-time courses which would lead to a business qualification such as the OND, courses which could be adopted by training institutions of all kinds, including secretarial colleges. If modular courses for the qualification of ONC and OND were to be introduced, secretaries would gain a further advantage. By mixing secretaries with men and women undertaking general administrative and commercial courses, attitudes both of, and towards, secretaries might change. They would be seen to be receiving a training similar to that of students of business studies and would be encouraged to view themselves as fulfilling an essential economic function, rather than a traditionally female supportive role.

Trying to change attitudes towards training could begin at the level of school. Careers advisers in schools and Youth

Employment Officers could encourage girls who wish to become secretaries to take a training which would lead to some recognised business qualification as well as the usual skills. This applies particularly to well-educated girls who, if they can find no promotion prospects, may well become disheartened. Girls should be taught at school that there is an increasing likelihood of their returning to work after they marry and have families and the more training they undertake initially, the easier the return to work will be.

If, in addition, employers were to provide training for secretaries, rather than expect training to be completed before starting work, general standards would rise. Employers would be advised to train secretaries, initially so that they learn as much about the organisation and its work as possible, then to improve skills if necessary, and then if appropriate, they should consider secretaries for further training which would enable them to move into other work within the company.

### 3. The age structure of the secretarial work force is unbalanced.

Many of the employment problems associated with secretaries in central London can be largely explained in terms of the age structure of the group of secretaries working there. Most secretaries are young and unmarried (Chapter IV) and thus have expectations and needs which are not shared by more mature employees. In the first place, younger people change their jobs more often and this leads to a relatively unstable work force. In the second place, they



appear to be more impressed by extrinsic work factors, especially pay, than are older secretaries (Chapter XII), which means that market forces tend to operate in response to this situation. In other words, where the demand for secretaries leads to higher salaries being offered, young secretaries being more influenced by pay are more ready to change their jobs on this account; in turn employers are discouraged from adapting the employment situation because they feel that pay, rather than any other consideration is the most effective means of attracting and keeping staff. Older secretaries, who place considerably more importance on the factors which are derived from the intrinsic nature of the work they do, tend to stay in their jobs once they find a satisfactory situation but suffer from the loss of status of secretarial work and the lack of responsibility and promotion prospects, which is at least partly brought about by the occupation being dominated by younger women who are often not ripe for promotion or increased status.

It may be that secretarial work, as it is structured at present, is indeed more suitable for the young. Younger secretaries, more often than older, think of men as superior to women (Chapter XV) so are more likely to be willing to accept a traditional role. As promotion prospects are so limited (Chapter XIII), there is little motivation for a secretary to make her work a long-term career.

The age structure of the secretarial population in central London could be changed if a positive effort were made to attract



older women back to the area, and if promotion prospects were offered by employers. The majority of employers would be delighted to accept an older secretary (Chapter XV).

A significant increase in the number of older secretaries in central London could be achieved if employers tried to attract back those women who are returning to work after bringing up children. If advertising were positively slanted towards them, this might well be successful, just as older women teachers were encouraged to return to work. It would, however, mean that employers would have to adopt a more flexible attitude towards these women. The provision of such facilities as crèches may not be realistic in central London, where office premises are so expensive, although it is not out of the question elsewhere. One central London employer in the present study had opened a suburban office, to which a great deal of his work was directed, simply in order to attract secretaries who were mothers. Apparently he had several such women from the same district working for his suburban office and they all cooperated to ensure he always had a reliable service. If one of their children became ill, they stood in for each other or organised child-caring. The employer left arrangements entirely up to the women to organise and was very happy with the result.

Special provision for married women could include the introduction of more part-time secretarial work. Viola Klein found in one study that although 14 per cent of single women

were working full-time as 'secretaries, typists, etc.', 8 per cent of married women were doing this work full-time, but only a further 1 per cent of them on a part-time basis. She stated as a consequence that 'This is the occupation which seems to offer least scope<sup>2</sup> for part-time employment.'

Retraining programmes by firms to ease a secretary's re-introduction into work would be helpful. The period spent at home in the company of small children is likely to sap the confidence of mothers and this may prevent them from returning to central London to work. If firms were to indicate to secretaries who were leaving to have children that they would be welcome back on a temporary basis, or alternatively, if employers were to use them in the same way as 'temps' from employment agencies to help out while staff are sick, or on holiday, or at 'rush' periods, it might help to keep the secretaries in practice and thus prevent feelings of inadequacy later on.

#### 4. There is insufficient differentiation in jobs and in secretarial abilities.

One of the major problems associated with the occupation concerns the lack of differentiation in job classification. The term 'secretary' has come to be employed as a blanket description for anyone who deals with correspondence, which indeed is the traditional nature of the occupation; however, the range of skills and responsibility found within it is considerable. Secretaries who are highly skilled and have responsible jobs resent, not so much being called 'secretary', but that those with few skills are able to call themselves by the same title. There should, therefore, be some means available to employers and to secretaries which would enable real distinctions to be made.



Firstly, some standardisation of secretarial qualifications is needed. This will have advantages for both employers and secretaries; employers will know that their employees have a certain level of basic knowledge and secretaries will feel that they have recognisable standards by which they may be judged. At present a variety of qualifications controlled by various examining bodies are available (Chapter V), and employers have little idea of the relative value of any particular qualification (Chapter XIV). Ideally, standardisation would mean devising a nationally-agreed scale into which the present system of qualifications could be incorporated.

Secondly, a universal grading scale for secretaries is needed, and if it were to be associated with a recognised system of qualifications, then a firm basis of recognition could be established. Grading categories might be (as a tentative suggestion): a) shorthand- or audio-typist, b) secretary, c) senior secretary and d) managing secretary (Chapter X), each grade requiring the possession of certain levels of education, training and experience.

The above proposals represent only one side of the coin, for if grading of secretaries is to be successful, then the jobs in which they would be working should be similarly distinguished, so that the most able women are directed to the most demanding jobs. All jobs requiring the services of a secretary should be analysed to take into account the degree of responsibility involved, and not just principally the status of the person for whom the secretary will be working. A Managing Director who uses a



secretary only to write letters and take telephone messages should have his (or her) job graded accordingly. By so doing, employers may be encouraged to give their secretaries greater responsibility. It is at this point that the greatest opposition is likely to occur, for large organisations in particular are most guilty of using secretaries as status symbols, and the resistance from these organisations is likely to be considerable. Payment should be related to the requirements of a particular job. A reservation here is that it might prompt employers to downgrade jobs and make them less interesting, so as to reduce costs.

An additional problem is that job analysis and grading may impose restrictions on the work situation by making individuals feel they cannot undertake work which has not been defined as part of a particular job, or by creating the impression that the general employment situation of secretaries is one which is bounded by rules and restrictions. One of the attractions of secretarial work may lie in the very flexibility and lack of definition of the role, so that a variety of women with differing aims, expectations and attitudes can find a range of positions which will suit their particular needs. The essential problem is to provide real opportunities for advancement for women who require it, and to limit the erosion of status which those who are happy in the secretary's job feel is taking place. Only by distinguishing secretaries with more responsible jobs from those with less, can this loss of status be achieved; hence the

emphasis on grading made above. It may only be necessary for grading to be imposed in a transitional phase, one in which employers and secretarial aspirants re-learn the difference in responsibility between a typist and a secretary, a confusion which has partly arisen through historical circumstances. If the supply of secretaries were to meet the demand, the status of the occupation would rise, since marginal employees would no longer be drawn into the market. It would still be necessary, however, to provide opportunities for advancement if the kind of woman who has traditionally undertaken secretarial work, is to continue to be attracted to the occupation, especially as women's employment aspirations rise.

Grading might stimulate a greater all-round concern with training. At present there is little stimulus for a secretary to train, because one with minimal qualifications can often get a well-paid job. If it is demonstrated that being well-qualified, or experienced, leads to better jobs, a greater stimulus to training would be provided. Such grading would not be an easy task, owing to the difficulties of categorisation described in Chapter X; nevertheless it is hoped that the suggestions made there will serve as an indication of the type of classification which could be used.

A further advantage of grading both secretaries and jobs, is that it would enable employment agencies to fulfil their role more adequately by being able to fit applicants to jobs. Since the Department of Employment has entered the field as employment agents on the same lines as the private sector (Chapter XVI)



perhaps they should give a lead in implementing grading scales which would be acceptable to secretaries and employers, so that both they and the other agencies will have a more simple and satisfactory task in matching applicants to jobs.

Employers can do a great deal to mitigate these and other problems. In the first place, large organisations may employ too many secretaries, often for reasons of status. Some employers, when they say they need a secretary, only require the skills of a shorthand-typist or audio-typist. Where, for instance, a secretary works predominantly at correspondence, answering the telephone and making appointments, in many cases she is a luxury and her duties could be passed over to others; the correspondence could be transferred to a centralised dictating system, telephoning could be transferred to the telephonist, and appointments to the boss. If more men learned to type, which would be a very useful asset, they could type the occasional letter themselves if it were very personal or were needed quickly. It is often just as quick to type a letter as it is to dictate one.

Employers are sometimes hesitant to install centralised dictating systems to deal with correspondence because they believe such systems are too impersonal. They can, however, be organised in such a way as to give job satisfaction to the typist. If, for example, units were sited in small groups within a department, used as a training situation for secretaries, and for the provision



of temporary secretarial help, they by no means need be impersonal. Women returning to work after bringing up a family could be re-introduced to secretarial work by first joining such a centre.

If the services of many 'secretaries' were dispensed with in this way, the shortage would be considerably relieved, and problems associated with excessive demand would be mitigated.

Even more secretaries could be released on to the market if employers used part-timers or temporary help from agencies on the basis of peak work loads, as an alternative to the present employment of more full-time staff than are really required.

At the same time, employers should examine the tasks undertaken by those secretaries who really are needed. It was found that variety was a valued aspect of secretarial work (Chapter XII) and that often it meant having greater responsibility (Chapter X). As responsibility is a highly-valued commodity for many secretaries, job enlargement should be investigated. Employers should examine work to see how much could be delegated to their secretaries. For instance, a considerable amount of dictating could be eliminated and the letters given to the secretary to write herself (Chapter X). Dictation is sometimes acknowledged to be stressful and difficult for employers. <sup>3</sup> It does seem strange that it should be considered desirable to be able to dictate in a perfect form, whereas in other circumstances written documents have to be revised; so that instead of training employers to dictate precisely, which is sometimes done, they should be encouraged to pass over correspondence to the secretary, who in turn should be trained to write letters herself.

Many employers still fail to recognise that the shortage of office staff is likely to be permanent; the demand for office workers increases while the supply remains relatively static. Changes will therefore have to be made from necessity. The present period is perhaps one of transition to one in which efficiency in the office will receive the same consideration as efficiency in other parts of organisations already receives. It might be advisable if, rather than try to attract new entrants, industry adapted itself to the present supply situation.

In the second place, employers should consider how best to incorporate secretaries into the organisational hierarchy so as to provide a career structure for them. Perhaps it would help if employers recognised that, partly owing to the relative youth of secretaries and partly because they are women who may have certain role expectations, secretaries can find it difficult to take steps to improve their employment situation. Consequently they may seem to be more diffident about promotion and obtaining more responsible work than they really are. Employers should therefore take it upon themselves positively to institute training for secretaries, so as to encourage them to have higher aspirations. In a demand situation, employers may feel that the last thing they want is for secretaries to have higher aspirations; they simply want enough secretaries who will stay where they are. In the long term, however, a secretary will leave if she sees no prospects of advancement, whether she expresses her dissatisfaction or not.

Promotion would be made much easier if the secretary's function were redefined. Rather than considering her primary function to be that of an assistant to an individual, her function should be to provide a comprehensive and knowledgeable office service.



In other words, the work content rather than the relationship between boss and secretary should be emphasised. The personal-service approach was appropriate in the days when secretaries were employed by private individuals; once secretaries were employed by people who were themselves employed in large organisations, it ceased to be appropriate. In an organisational setting, the needs not only of the individual boss but of the organisation itself, have to be considered, and this can conflict with the idea of personal service. For instance, the organisation may demand that correspondence be the most important secretarial function, since communications are so vital to its interests; it may demand that a secretary works for more than one person for the sake of efficiency, and these demands may nullify the advantages of the personal assistant approach.

The difficulty associated with the changes proposed above is that, paradoxically, in a chronic demand situation, there is little incentive to institute change. Employers are fearful of imposing too many demands on secretaries or instituting change, because they feel secretaries will not be attracted to work for them, or, once working, may leave. However, the persistent shortage may be, and indeed is, prompting some employers to overhaul their employment strategies, mainly by instituting central typewriting services. Secretaries are not encouraged to accept change; they are able to find well-paid work with little initial effort and thus have little incentive to devote more time to training. If, as has been repeatedly stressed elsewhere, the motivation to train were encouraged in schools, girls might come to appreciate that the better their initial training, the more likely they are to enjoy their work and make a successful return to it after childbearing.



An immediate problem is how to increase the pool of secretaries. This may be done to some extent by attracting university graduates to the occupation. At present they are not satisfied that the work is sufficiently demanding, but if it could be seen to be an apprenticeship situation which was integrated into the occupational hierarchy, they might become more interested in the work. Secondly, as has been previously emphasised, employers should do everything in their power to induce older women to return to the occupation. Thirdly, men could be trained as secretaries, although this has some threatening implications for women (Chapter XV).

### Recommendations

On the basis of the above discussion, the following recommendations are made, directed to the different groups concerned with the employment of secretaries.

#### A. Recommendations to those concerned with training secretaries.

1. Secretarial qualifications should be standardised.
2. Training should place less emphasis on speeds in shorthand and more on general business studies.
3. Secretarial training could be incorporated into a national business training system such as the National Awards in Business Studies.
4. Lengthier secretarial training courses should be instituted.
5. School-leavers wishing to take up secretarial work should be advised to take a course leading to a business qualification.

B. Recommendations to employers.

1. A career structure for secretaries should be devised by providing opportunities for upward mobility other than (as at present) only through the status of the person for whom a secretary works.
2. Where possible, training for secretaries should be encouraged in order to teach them the employer's business and to prepare them for other work within the organisation.
3. Older women secretaries should be encouraged to return to the occupation, especially in central London, by making special provision for them in terms of hours and holidays, and by the provision of re-entry training.
4. The efficient use of secretarial staff should be examined.
5. A grading scale for secretaries and the jobs they fill should be agreed and adopted where practical.
6. Job enlargement should be considered.
7. Employers should learn more about present secretarial qualifications.

C. Recommendations to secretaries.

1. Secretaries should be prepared to undertake extra training where necessary and to learn as much of the employer's business as possible. Ambitious secretaries should regard their work as an apprenticeship situation just as men used to do.
2. They should consider secretarial work as the provision of a comprehensive office service rather than as a personal service to a single individual.

**D. Recommendations to interested organisations.**

1. Organisations such as the British Institute of Management, Chambers of Commerce, The Industrial Society, the Institute of Personnel Management and secretarial organisations, should unite to adopt a common policy on the employment of secretaries which would embody the recommendations made.

**E. Recommendations to Government Departments**

1. The Department of Education and Science should initiate consultations with employers' organisations and those concerned with training, in order to agree upon grading scales for secretaries.

2. The Department of Employment could encourage a new approach to secretarial work through their employment centres by adopting proposals agreed between Government, training bodies, employers and secretaries.

**CONCLUSION**

It was stated in the Introduction to this study that the initial aims of the research were:

1. To examine the hypothesis that the secretarial occupation is important in terms of upward occupational and social mobility for women.
2. To describe an occupational group of women office workers, and,
3. To provide recommendations to improve the employment situation for both secretaries and employers.

over ...



In Chapters XIII and XIV it was shown that the secretary's job was important for some women in enabling them to achieve upward occupational mobility. It was possible to use the secretary's job as the peak of a career, as the mid-point of a career leading to administrative or managerial work, or as the initial stepping-off point to a career in an entirely different type of work. However, the occupation did not generally enable women to achieve upward social, intergenerational mobility.

It is hoped that the description of a sample of secretaries with which the major part of this thesis was concerned, will provide useful comparative information for other studies of working women and that the practical recommendations made will help to improve the employment situation of secretaries.

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# THE CITY UNIVERSITY

ST JOHN STREET · LONDON E.C.1 · 01-253 4399

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE & HUMANITIES

June, 1969.

Dear

I am a sociologist at The City University, undertaking a survey of secretaries and their jobs. I hope, as a result of the survey, to be able to provide some understanding of this important section of the working population, and at the same time to obtain information which will be of benefit to the secretary and her profession.

The Council of the Institute of Qualified Private Secretaries have expressed interest in this work, and they have given me permission to send a questionnaire to all of their members. It is for this reason that I am writing to you. Possibly you will have seen notice of my survey, earlier in the year, in a copy of the Bulletin.

As there are so many aspects of the secretary's job to cover, the questionnaire is of necessity fairly long, and it may take you anything up to an hour to answer all the questions. I hope, nevertheless, that you will feel able to complete it.

If you are not working as a secretary, would you be kind enough to fill in your name and address and then jot down what job you do, and return the questionnaire to me.

If there are any questions you wish to ask, or if any problems arise in the completion of your questionnaire, I shall be very happy to deal with them.

I would like to assure you that any information you give me will be treated in absolute confidence and any results will be produced in such a way as to make each respondent completely anonymous.

When the results have been obtained and analysed, they will be made available to your Institute so that you will be able to see the outcome for yourself.

Thank you most sincerely for your cooperation and help in this research. A stamped addressed envelope is enclosed for your completed questionnaire.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs.) Rosalie Silverstone, B.Sc.(Soc.)

Head of Department, Professor Sir Robert Birley, K.C.M.G., M.A., F.S.A.





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Yours sincerely,

(Mrs.) Rosalie Silverstone, B.Sc.(Soc.)

Head of Department, Professor Sir Robert Birley, K.C.M.G., M.A., F.S.A.





# THE CITY UNIVERSITY

ST JOHN STREET · LONDON E.C.1 · 01-253 4399

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE & HUMANITIES

Dear Madam,

I have been given permission by your employer to hand you the enclosed questionnaire.

I am a sociologist undertaking a survey of secretaries and their jobs. I hope, as a result of the survey, to be able to provide some understanding of this important section of the working population, and at the same time to obtain information which will be of benefit to the secretary and her profession.

I would like to assure you that any information you give me will be treated in absolute confidence and the results obtained will be presented in such a way as to make each respondent and employer completely anonymous.

As there are so many aspects of the secretary's job to cover, the questionnaire is of necessity fairly long and it may take you anything up to an hour to answer all the questions. I hope, nevertheless, that you will feel able to complete it. If you will take it home and when complete return it to me in the enclosed stamped-addressed envelope, I shall be most grateful.

If there are any questions you wish to ask, or if any problems arise in the completion of your questionnaire, please let me know.

Thank you most sincerely for your cooperation and help in this research.

Yours faithfully,

(Mrs.) Rosalie Silverstone, B.Sc.(Soc.)



THE CITY UNIVERSITY LONDON.  
Department of Social Science and Humanities

## QUESTIONNAIRE TO SECRETARIES

INSTRUCTIONS: Where a list of alternatives is given, please put a tick in the box next to the appropriate item.

1. Name

2. Home address

3. Age (in years)

4. Are you

<input type="checkbox"/>	Single
<input type="checkbox"/>	Engaged
<input type="checkbox"/>	Married
<input type="checkbox"/>	Divorced
<input type="checkbox"/>	Widowed

5. If you are (were once) married, for how many years have you been (were you) married?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Under one year
<input type="checkbox"/>	1 - 3 years (inclusive)
<input type="checkbox"/>	4 - 6 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	7 - 9 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	10 - 12 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	13 - 15 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 15 years

6. How many children do you have?

<input type="checkbox"/>	None
<input type="checkbox"/>	One child
<input type="checkbox"/>	Two children
<input type="checkbox"/>	Three children
<input type="checkbox"/>	Four children
<input type="checkbox"/>	More than four children

7. If you have children, what are their ages?

First child is aged	<input type="text"/>
Second child is aged	<input type="text"/>
Third child is aged	<input type="text"/>
Fourth child is aged	<input type="text"/>
Further children are aged	<input type="text"/>

Now come some questions about jobs held by members of your family. This is an important part of the questionnaire, so please be as detailed as possible. In order to help you fill in the information, some examples are given below.

EXAMPLES

<u>Title of job</u>	<u>Employed or Self-employed</u>	<u>Rank or Grade</u>	<u>Description of job</u>
Farmer	Self-employed	-	Managed own large farm
Clerk	Employed	-	Worked in paper manufacturing company as costs accounts clerk
Assembler	Employed	Foreman	Assembly line work making car bodies
Personnel Officer	Employed	Manager	Managed personnel department in oil company

8. What is your father's job? (If your father is no longer living, or is retired, give his last job). Please fill in the details below.

<u>Title of job</u>	<u>Employed or Self-employed</u>	<u>Rank or Grade</u>	<u>Description of job</u>
---------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------	---------------------------



9. What was your father's job when you were 12 years old?

<u>Title of job</u>	<u>Employed or Self-employed</u>	<u>Rank or Grade</u>	<u>Description of job</u>
---------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------	---------------------------

10. If your mother has worked at any time, other than as a housewife, what is (or was) your mother's job? If your mother has had more than one job, please mention each job.

11. If you are (were) married, what is (was) your husband's job?

<u>Title of job</u>	<u>Employed or Self-employed</u>	<u>Rank or Grade</u>	<u>Description of job</u>
---------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------	---------------------------

12. If you are engaged to be married, what is your fiancé's job?

<u>Title of job</u>	<u>Employed or Self-employed</u>	<u>Rank or Grade</u>	<u>Description of job</u>
---------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------	---------------------------

13. If you are single and would like to marry, what would you like your future husband's job to be?

14. What was the last school you attended?

- ☐ Central
- ☐ Comprehensive
- ☐ Elementary
- ☐ Grammar
- ☐ Private
- ☐ Public
- ☐ Secondary Modern
- ☐ Technical (Secondary Technical)
- ☐ Other kind of school (please specify)

15. Did you have any further education after leaving school, NOT including secretarial training? If you did, please put a tick in the appropriate boxes.

	Full-time	Part-time	Day Release	Evening Classes
University				
Teachers' Training College or College of Education				
College of Advanced Technology				
College of Further Education				
Technical College				
Evening Institute				
Classes run by Organisations				
Correspondence Course				
Other (please specify)				

16. Examinations passed, NOT including secretarial training. (Please write in the number of subjects passed where appropriate).

<input type="checkbox"/>	None
<input type="checkbox"/>	C.S.E.
<input type="checkbox"/>	R.S.A.
<input type="checkbox"/>	G.C.E. 'O' level
<input type="checkbox"/>	G.C.E. 'A' level
<input type="checkbox"/>	General School Certificate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Higher School Certificate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Degree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other examinations passed (please specify)

17. Where did you first learn shorthand? Please put a tick in the appropriate columns.

	Full-time	Part-time	Day Release	Evening Classes
<input type="checkbox"/> College of Further Education				
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial College				
<input type="checkbox"/> Firm's own School				
<input type="checkbox"/> Secretarial College				
<input type="checkbox"/> School				
<input type="checkbox"/> Technical College				
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other place of training (please specify)				

18. Where did you first learn typing? Please put a tick in the appropriate columns.

	Full-time	Part-time	Day Release	Evening Classes
<input type="checkbox"/> College of Further Education				
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial College				
<input type="checkbox"/> Firm's own School				
<input type="checkbox"/> Secretarial College				
<input type="checkbox"/> School				
<input type="checkbox"/> Technical College				
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other place of training (please specify)				

19. How long did your initial shorthand and typing training last? If you learned both at the same time, please fill in column headed 'shorthand-typing'.

<u>Shorthand</u>	<u>Typing</u>	<u>Shorthand-typing</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 - 6 months	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 - 6 months	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 - 6 months
<input type="checkbox"/> 7 - 12 months	<input type="checkbox"/> 7 - 12 months	<input type="checkbox"/> 7 - 12 months
<input type="checkbox"/> 13 - 18 months	<input type="checkbox"/> 13 - 18 months	<input type="checkbox"/> 13 - 18 months
<input type="checkbox"/> 19 - 24 months	<input type="checkbox"/> 19 - 24 months	<input type="checkbox"/> 19 - 24 months
<input type="checkbox"/> More than 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/> More than 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/> More than 2 years

20. Have you attended any classes or had any further secretarial training since then? If so, please state below the type of training you received, the name of the course and the institution(s) at which it took place.



21. What was the greatest influence in helping you to decide to become a Secretary? (Please number any relevant items in order of importance, i.e. '1' for the most important influence, '2' for the next, and so on).

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  | Parents   |
|  | School  |
|  | Own decision  |
|  | Couldn't think of anything else to do                       |
|  | Suitable occupation until marriage                          |
|  | Stepping stone to other jobs                                |
|  | Good salary   |
|  | Couldn't do what I really wanted to (what was this?)        |
|  | Any other reasons (please specify and include in numbering) |

22. Have you ever done any temporary work? If so for what reason(s)?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  | Moving or going abroad                         |
|  | Domestic or personal commitments               |
|  | Prefer varied routine of temporary work        |
|  | Stopping work soon for family or other reasons |
|  | Did not desire continuous permanent employment |
|  | For experience before taking permanent job     |
|  | Difficulty in obtaining permanent employment   |
|  | 'Filling in' between permanent jobs            |
|  | Any other reason (please specify)              |

23. What jobs have you had since leaving school, including your present job? Please fill in the details below, beginning with your first job and continuing in chronological order.

a) <u>What was your position called?</u> e.g. typist	b) <u>Year</u>	c) <u>Length of time in job.</u>	d) <u>Pay per annum when starting job</u>	e) <u>Type of firm</u> e.g. solicitor	f) <u>Reason for leaving</u>

24. What is your basic pay per annum now? (Before deductions)

25. Do you receive any extra payments or financial help? e.g. Christmas bonus, luncheon vouchers. Please give details.

5. Do you receive any other 'perks'?



27. Do you get paid on a weekly or a monthly basis?

- ☐ Weekly  
☐ Monthly  
☐ Other basis (please specify)

28. Who is the person who interviewed you for your present job? e.g. your boss, personnel officer.

29. How did you obtain your present position? Through

- ☐ A newspaper advertisement  
☐ An employment agency  
☐ Family or friends  
☐ Promotion within your firm  
☐ School  
☐ Other (please specify)

30. What are your official hours of work? e.g. 9 - 5

31. Do you work on Saturdays?

- ☐ Yes (what hours?)  
☐ No  
☐ Occasionally (please give details)

32. Do you have to clock in at work or register that you have arrived?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

33. Are there any repercussions for you if you are late for work? If so, what are these?

34. Do you ever work overtime? e.g. work after regular hours, take work home, work during lunch hour, or at the weekend. Please give details and say approximately how often this happens.

35. Do you get paid for any overtime you work? Or do you get time off in lieu of overtime worked? Please give details.

36. Do you have any regular breaks in work during the day, e.g. for tea, coffee, lunch? Please tick the appropriate columns.

- ☐ Mid-morning break (please give length)  
☐ Lunch break " " "  
☐ Mid-afternoon break " " "  
☐ Tea/coffee at desk during morning  
☐ Tea/coffee at desk during afternoon  
☐ No specific breaks  
☐ Other (please specify)

37. What are your usual arrangements for lunch? Do you

- ☐ Go home  
☐ Have lunch in firm's canteen  
☐ Go out to a restaurant  
☐ Take sandwiches or snack and eat it in the office or elsewhere  
☐ Buy snack out and eat it in the office or elsewhere  
☐ ~~Have no lunch~~  
☐ Other arrangements (please specify)

38. Are there times at work when you have nothing to do? If so, for how long in total does this last?

- ☐ Never have nothing to do
- ☐ Under 1 hour per day
- ☐ 1 - 2 hours per day
- ☐ 3 - 4 hours per day
- ☐ More than 4 hours per day
- ☐ Occasionally (please specify)

39. How long is your annual holiday? If you have any other time off, apart from Bank Holidays, please give details of this as well.

40. In your present job, do you work for one person or more than one person?

- ☐ For one person
- ☐ For one person mainly but occasionally for others
- ☐ For two people
- ☐ For three people
- ☐ For four people
- ☐ For five people
- ☐ For six people
- ☐ For more than six people

41. What is your boss's job called? e.g. manager of shipping department, Director. Please give the job title for each person you work for.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

42. Do you work for a firm or organisation, or for a private individual? If you do NOT work for a firm or organisation, go on to question no. 46, after answering this question.

- ☐ Firm or organisation
- ☐ Private individual
- ☐ Other (please specify)

43. If you work for a firm or organisation, what type of work does it carry out? e.g. solicitors, bankers, toy manufacturers, large complex organisation (such as I.C.I.). If you work in a large complex organisation, please state in which part you work.

44. Does your firm or organisation employ the following? Please tick where appropriate.

- ☐ Secretaries
- ☐ Personal assistants
- ☐ Shorthand-typists
- ☐ Audio-typists
- ☐ Typists

45. Are there other people in your firm or organisation who do what you would regard as a secretary's work, but who are not called secretaries? If so, what are they called and what work do they do?

46. Do you use any machine other than a typewriter in your work? If so, what machines do you use?

47. Are you prepared to use audio-machines in your work?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Yes, under certain conditions (please specify)

48. If you are not prepared to use audio-machines in your work, please give your reasons.

49. Do you think that machines will change the secretary's job? If you do, please say how you think it will be changed?

50. Can you see a time coming when machines will replace the secretary?

☐ Yes

☐ No

51. How many miles away from your work do you live?

☐ Under 2 miles

☐ 3 - 6 miles

☐ 7 - 10 miles

☐ 11 - 20 miles

☐ Over 20 miles

52. How long does it take you to get to work?

53. Often secretaries move to a large town or city to work. If you did this at any time, please state the place you came from and the town or city you moved to.

From

To

1.

2.

3.

54. When you apply for a job, are you interested in promotion prospects?

☐ Yes

☐ No



55. What features of promotion are in general most important to you? Please number in order of importance, i.e. most important feature '1', next '2', and so on.

- ☐ Increase in pay
- ☐ Higher status of boss
- ☐ Change in title of job, e.g. from shorthand typist to secretary, or secretary to p.a.
- ☐ Having own office
- ☐ More responsibility
- ☐ Change to a higher status firm or employer
- ☐ Any other (please specify and include in numbering)

56. Do you have any prospects of promotion open to you in your present job?

- ☐ You are certain to be promoted (give details)
- ☐ You have a possibility of promotion (give details)
- ☐ You have no prospects of promotion

57. Are your plans for the immediate future

- ☐ To remain in your present job
- ☐ To try and get promoted where you now work
- ☐ To find another job elsewhere
- ☐ Uncertain

58. What kind of job would you consider as being at the peak of your profession?

59. Have you ever worked for a boss who retired, or was about to retire?

If so, did you

- ☐ Find another job before he retired
- ☐ Become secretary to his successor
- ☐ Find another job in the same firm
- ☐ Find another job elsewhere after he retired
- ☐ Take any other action (please specify)

60. Do you know anyone who used to be a secretary but who has taken up a different occupation since then? (not including housewife). If so, what was this occupation? If you know more than one person who has done this, please name each occupation.

61. Have you at any time seriously considered other jobs besides that of a secretary? If so, please give details of any other jobs considered.

62. Do you find your work

- ☐ Very interesting all the time
- ☐ Interesting most of the time
- ☐ Fairly interesting with dull patches
- ☐ Mostly rather boring
- ☐ Very dull all the time

63. If you were looking for a new job, what would be the most important features you would look for? Please number in order of importance, e.g. most important feature '1', next most important feature '2', and so on.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Interesting duties
<input type="checkbox"/>	Starting salary
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prospect of promotion
<input type="checkbox"/>	Convenient hours
<input type="checkbox"/>	Good working conditions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Security
<input type="checkbox"/>	Convenient travel
<input type="checkbox"/>	Good fringe benefits
<input type="checkbox"/>	Glamorous type of firm or organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other feature (please specify and include in numbering)

64. What do you like most about your present job?

65. What do you dislike most about your present job?

66. What does your present job entail? Please give details of ALL the different tasks you have to perform, e.g. answer telephone, make appointments, take short-hand notes, sort papers, etc. Please write down each activity according to the amount of time it takes up, i.e. if you spend MOST time typing, write 'typing' first, then the activity which takes up the next amount of time, and so on.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

67. Do you consider that you have in any way changed your work situation, e.g. by improving dictation, making changes in office routine, reorganising any aspect of your work? If so, please give details.

S09

68. Do you think you have influenced your boss in any way? If so, please give details.

69. In which of the following social classes would you place yourself?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Upper class
<input type="checkbox"/>	Upper middle class
<input type="checkbox"/>	Middle class
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lower middle class
<input type="checkbox"/>	Working class
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other class (please specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

70. Do you belong to any associations related to your work? e.g. a secretarial association, staff association or a trade union. Please give the names of any work associations to which you belong.

71. If you belong to a union, is membership compulsory?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

72. From the point of view of status (not salary), would you say the secretary's job is above, below or equal to that of:-

	Above	Below	Equal
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher			
<input type="checkbox"/> Clerk			
<input type="checkbox"/> Waitress			
<input type="checkbox"/> Florist			
<input type="checkbox"/> Accountant			
<input type="checkbox"/> Housewife			
<input type="checkbox"/> Office cleaner			
<input type="checkbox"/> Nurse			
<input type="checkbox"/> Shop assistant			

73. Do you think the status of the secretary's job in your place of work is

<input type="checkbox"/>	Too high
<input type="checkbox"/>	Too low
<input type="checkbox"/>	Just as it should be
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

74. Do you think the status of the secretary's job in general is

<input type="checkbox"/>	Too high
<input type="checkbox"/>	Too low
<input type="checkbox"/>	Just as it should be
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

75. If you are NOT married, how do you think marriage would affect your career?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Would stop working
<input type="checkbox"/>	Would work until I had children
<input type="checkbox"/>	Would do temporary work
<input type="checkbox"/>	Would continue in present job
<input type="checkbox"/>	Would get part-time work
<input type="checkbox"/>	Would get a job nearer home
<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other anticipated effects (please specify)

76. If you are NOT married, would you intend to return to work as a secretary after marrying and having children?

<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know



7. If you ARE married, how did marriage affect your work? Did you

- ☐ Stop working
- ☐ Work until you had children
- ☐ Do temporary work
- ☐ Do part-time work
- ☐ Continue in same job
- ☐ Get a job nearer to home
- ☐ Any other effects (please specify)

8. Would you be happy to work for a woman?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

9. In your attitude to the opposite sex, do you think of men in general as being

- ☐ Very superior
- ☐ Superior
- ☐ Equal
- ☐ Inferior
- ☐ Very inferior
- ☐ Don't know

10. It is often believed that the relationship between boss and secretary is so close that it leads to a romantic involvement. Do you think this is a true picture?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Don't know

11. Have you ever felt a romantic attachment to any boss?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

12. Has your present boss ever asked you out? If so, was it for

- ☐ A formal occasion (e.g. representing the firm)
- ☐ A casual meal, lunch or supper, during the working week
- ☐ A date after work
- ☐ A date at the weekend
- ☐ Home with his family

13. If you accepted any of these invitations, did it alter your relationship at work? If so, in what way?

14. Is your boss

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed

15. If you are married, did you marry your boss?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

16. If you are married, did you marry someone you met at work?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Thank you for answering these detailed questions. What do you feel a secretary's job should be?

Is there anything you wish to add which has not been covered by your replies to these questions, and have you any other comments?

R.A.S.  
June, 1969.

CITY UNIVERSITY, LONDON.  
Department of Social Science and Humanities.

QUESTIONNAIRE TO HOUSEWIVES

INSTRUCTIONS: Where a list of alternatives is given, please put a tick in the box next to the appropriate item.

Name  
  
Home address  
  
Age (in years)

Are you  
☐ Married  
☐ Divorced  
☐ Widowed

For how many years have you been (were you) married?  
☐ Under one year  
☐ 1 - 3 years (inclusive)  
☐ 4 - 6 years  
☐ 7 - 9 years  
☐ 10 - 12 years  
☐ 13 - 15 years  
☐ Over 15 years

How many children do you have?  
☐ None  
☐ One child  
☐ Two children  
☐ Three children  
☐ Four children  
☐ More than four children

If you have children, what are their ages?  
First child is aged   
Second child is aged   
Third child is aged   
Fourth child is aged   
Further children are aged

Now come some questions about jobs held by members of your family. This is an important part of the questionnaire, so please be as detailed as possible. In order to help you fill in the information, some examples are given below.

EXAMPLES

<u>Title of job</u>	<u>Employed or Self-employed</u>	<u>Rank or Grade</u>	<u>Description of job</u>
Farmer	Self-employed	-	Managed own large farm
Clerk	Employed	-	Worked in paper manufacturing company as costs accounts clerk
Assembler	Employed	Foreman	Assembly line work making car bodies
Personnel Officer	Employed	Manager	Managed personnel department in oil company

What is your father's job? (If your father is no longer living, or is retired, give his last job). Please fill in the details below.

<u>Title of job</u>	<u>Employed or Self-employed</u>	<u>Rank or Grade</u>	<u>Description of job</u>
---------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------	---------------------------



What was your father's job when you were 12 years old?

<u>Title of job</u>	<u>Employed or</u> <u>Self-employed</u>	<u>Rank or</u> <u>Grade</u>	<u>Description of job</u>
---------------------	--	--------------------------------	---------------------------

If your mother has worked at any time, other than as a housewife, what is (or was) your mother's job? If your mother has had more than one job, please mention each job.

What is (was) your husband's job?

<u>Title of job</u>	<u>Employed or</u> <u>Self-employed</u>	<u>Rank or</u> <u>Grade</u>	<u>Description of job</u>
---------------------	--	--------------------------------	---------------------------

What was the last school you attended?

- |                          |                                       |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Central                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Comprehensive                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Elementary                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Grammar                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Private                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Public                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Secondary Modern                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Technical (Secondary Technical)       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other kind of school (please specify) |

Did you have any further education after leaving school, NOT including secretarial training? If you did, please put a tick in the appropriate boxes.

	Full-time	Part-time	Day Release	Evening Classes
<input type="checkbox"/> University				
<input type="checkbox"/> Teachers' Training College or College of Education				
<input type="checkbox"/> College of Advanced Technology				
<input type="checkbox"/> College of Further Education				
<input type="checkbox"/> Technical College				
<input type="checkbox"/> Evening Institute				
<input type="checkbox"/> Classes run by Organisations				
<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence Course				
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)				

Examinations passed, NOT including secretarial training. (Please write in number of subjects passed where appropriate).

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | None                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | C.S.E.                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | R.S.A.                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | G.C.E. 'O' level                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | G.C.E. 'A' level                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | General School Certificate                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Higher School Certificate                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Degree                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other examinations passed (please specify) |

10. Often secretaries move to a large town or city to work. If you did this any time, when you were a secretary, please state the place you came from and the town or city you moved to.

From

To

1.

2.

3.

11. Did you ever work for a boss who retired, or was about to retire? so did you

- ☐ Find another job before he retired
- ☐ Become secretary to his successor
- ☐ Find another job in the same firm
- ☐ Find another job elsewhere after he retired
- ☐ Take any other action (please specify)

12. Do you know anyone who used to be a secretary but who has taken up a different occupation since then? (not including housewife). If so, what is this occupation? If you know more than one person who has done this, please name each occupation.

13. From the point of view of status (not salary), would you say the secretary's job is above, below, or equal to that of:-

	Above	Below	Equal
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher			
<input type="checkbox"/> Clerk			
<input type="checkbox"/> Waitress			
<input type="checkbox"/> Florist			
<input type="checkbox"/> Accountant			
<input type="checkbox"/> Housewife			
<input type="checkbox"/> Office cleaner			
<input type="checkbox"/> Nurse			
<input type="checkbox"/> Shop assistant			

14. How did marriage affect your work? Did you

- ☐ Stop working
- ☐ Work until you had children
- ☐ Do temporary work
- ☐ Do part-time work
- ☐ Continue in same job
- ☐ Get a job nearer to home
- ☐ Any other effects (please specify)

15. Did you marry your boss?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

16. Did you marry someone you met at work?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Thank you for answering these questions. Do you have any comments to make about the secretary's job?



CITY UNIVERSITY, LONDON.  
Department of Social Science and Humanities.

QUESTIONNAIRE TO FORMER SECRETARIES

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Where a list of alternatives is given, please put a tick in the box next to the appropriate item.

Name

Home address

Age (in years)

Are you

- ☐ Single  
☐ Engaged  
☐ Married  
☐ Divorced  
☐ Widowed

If you are (were once) married, for how many years have you been (were you) married?

- ☐ Under one year  
☐ 1 - 3 years (inclusive)  
☐ 4 - 6 years  
☐ 7 - 9 years  
☐ 10 - 12 years  
☐ 13 - 15 years  
☐ Over 15 years

How many children do you have?

- ☐ None  
☐ One child  
☐ Two children  
☐ Three children  
☐ Four children  
☐ More than four children

If you have children, what are their ages?

- First child is aged   
 Second child is aged   
 Third child is aged   
 Fourth child is aged   
 Further children are aged

Now come some questions about jobs held by members of your family. This is an important part of the questionnaire, so please be as detailed as possible. In order to help you fill in the information, some examples are given below.

EXAMPLES

<u>Title of job</u>	<u>Employed or Self-employed</u>	<u>Rank or Grade</u>	<u>Description of job</u>
Farmer	Self-employed	-	Managed own large farm
Clerk	Employed	-	Worked in paper manufacturing company as costs accounts clerk
Assembler	Employed	Foreman	Assembly line work making car bodies
Personnel Officer	Employed	Manager	Managed personnel department in oil company

What is your father's job? (If your father is no longer living, or is retired, please state this.)

<u>Title of job</u>	<u>Employed or Self-employed</u>	<u>Rank or Grade</u>	<u>Description of job</u>
---------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------	---------------------------

9. What was your father's job when you were 12 years old?

<u>Title of job</u>	<u>Employed or</u> <u>Self-employed</u>	<u>Rank or</u> <u>Grade</u>	<u>Description of job</u>
---------------------	--	--------------------------------	---------------------------

10. If your mother has worked at any time, other than as a housewife, what is (or was) your mother's job? If your mother has had more than one job, please mention each job.

11. If you are (were) married, what is (was) your husband's job?

<u>Title of job</u>	<u>Employed or</u> <u>Self-employed</u>	<u>Rank or</u> <u>Grade</u>	<u>Description of job</u>
---------------------	--	--------------------------------	---------------------------

12. If you are engaged to be married, what is your fiancé's job?

<u>Title of job</u>	<u>Employed or</u> <u>Self-employed</u>	<u>Rank or</u> <u>Grade</u>	<u>Description of job</u>
---------------------	--	--------------------------------	---------------------------

13. If you are single and would like to marry, what would you like your future husband's job to be?

14. What was the last school you attended?

- |                          |                                       |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Central                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Comprehensive                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Elementary                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Grammar                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Private                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Public                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Secondary Modern                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Technical (Secondary Technical)       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other kind of school (please specify) |

15. Did you have any further education after leaving school, NOT including secretarial training? If you did, please put a tick in the appropriate boxes.

	Full-time	Part-time	Day Release	Evening Classes
<input type="checkbox"/> University				
<input type="checkbox"/> Teachers' Training College or College of Education				
<input type="checkbox"/> College of Advanced Technology				
<input type="checkbox"/> College of Further Education				
<input type="checkbox"/> Technical College				
<input type="checkbox"/> Evening Institute				
<input type="checkbox"/> Classes run by Organisations				
<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence Course				
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)				

16. Examinations passed, NOT including secretarial training. (Please write in number of subjects passed where appropriate).

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | None                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | C.S.E.                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | R.S.A.                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | G.C.E. 'O' level                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | G.C.E. 'A' level                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Higher School Certificate                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Degree                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other examinations passed (please specify) |



17. Where did you first learn shorthand? Please put a tick in the appropriate columns.

	Full-time	Part-time	Day Release	Evening Classes
<input type="checkbox"/> College of Further Education				
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial College				
<input type="checkbox"/> Firm's own School				
<input type="checkbox"/> Secretarial College				
<input type="checkbox"/> School				
<input type="checkbox"/> Technical College				
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other place of training (please specify)				

18. Where did you first learn typing? Please put a tick in the appropriate columns.

	Full-time	Part-time	Day Release	Evening Classes
<input type="checkbox"/> College of Further Education				
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial College				
<input type="checkbox"/> Firm's own School				
<input type="checkbox"/> Secretarial College				
<input type="checkbox"/> School				
<input type="checkbox"/> Technical College				
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other place of training (please specify)				

19. How long did your initial shorthand and typing training last? If you learned both at the same time, please fill in column headed 'shorthand-typing'.

Shorthand

Typing

Shorthand-typing

<input type="checkbox"/>	1 - 6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 - 6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 - 6 months
<input type="checkbox"/>	7 - 12 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	7 - 12 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	7 - 12 months
<input type="checkbox"/>	13 - 18 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	13 - 18 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	13 - 18 months
<input type="checkbox"/>	19 - 24 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	19 - 24 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	19 - 24 months
<input type="checkbox"/>	More than 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	More than 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	More than 2 years

20. Have you attended any classes or had any further secretarial training since then? If so, please state below the type of training you received, the name of the course and the institution(s) at which it took place.

21. If you were once a secretary, what was the greatest influence in helping you to decide to become a secretary? (Please number any relevant items in order of importance, i.e. '1' for the most important influence, '2' for the next, and so on).

<input type="checkbox"/>	Parents
<input type="checkbox"/>	School
<input type="checkbox"/>	Own decision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Couldn't think of anything else to do
<input type="checkbox"/>	Suitable occupation until marriage
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stepping stone to other jobs
<input type="checkbox"/>	Good salary
<input type="checkbox"/>	Couldn't do what I really wanted to (what was this?)



22. What jobs have you had since leaving school, including your present job? Please fill in the details below, beginning with your first job and continuing in chronological order.

a) <u>What was your position called?</u> e.g. typist	b) <u>Year</u>	c) <u>Length of time in job.</u>	d) <u>Pay per annum when starting job</u>	e) <u>Type of firm</u> e.g. solicitor	f) <u>Reason for leaving</u>

23. What is your basic pay per annum now? (Before deductions)

24. Often secretaries move to a large town or city to work. If you did this at any time when you were a secretary, please state the place you came from and the town or city you moved to.

**To**

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

25. Do you know anyone, other than yourself, who used to be a secretary but who has taken up a different occupation since then? (not including housewife). If so, what was this occupation? If you know more than one person who has done this, please name each occupation.

26. From the point of view of status (not salary), would you say the secretary's job is above, below or equal to that of:-

	Above	Below	Equal
Teacher			
Clerk			
Waitress			
Florist			
Accountant			
Housewife			
Office cleaner			
Shop assistant			

27. Do you think the status of the secretary's job in general is

- |                          |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Too high             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Too low              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Just as it should be |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know           |

28. In which of the following social classes would you place yourself?

- |                          |                              |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Upper class                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Upper middle class           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Middle class                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Lower middle class           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Working class                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other class (please specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know                   |

29. If you are married, how did marriage affect your work? Did you

- |                          |                                    |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Stop working                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Work until you had children        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Do temporary work                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Do part-time work                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Continue in same job               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Get a job nearer to home           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Any other effects (please specify) |

30. If you are married, did you marry your boss?

- |                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No  |

31. If you are married, did you marry someone you met at work?

- |                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No  |

32. For what reasons did you decide to stop working as a secretary, and take up another occupation?

33. Do you have any comments to make about the secretary's job?

September, 1969.





# THE CITY UNIVERSITY

ST JOHN STREET · LONDON E.C.1 · 01-253 4399

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE & HUMANITIES

Dear

Thank you very much for completing and returning the questionnaire about secretaries. I greatly appreciate your help.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs.) R. Silverstone, B.Sc.(Soc.)

Head of Department, Professor Sir Robert Birley, K.C.M.G., M.A., F.S.A.





# THE CITY UNIVERSITY

ST JOHN STREET · LONDON E.C.1 · 01-253 4399

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE & HUMANITIES

October, 1969.

Dear

You may remember that I sent you a questionnaire at the end of June about secretaries and their jobs.

As the summer holidays have intervened, and I have not yet received your reply, I wonder if you have overlooked it. I would like to emphasize the importance for my research of obtaining as many completed questionnaires as possible. I would therefore be most grateful if you could complete and return yours to me as soon as possible.

In case your original copy has been mislaid I am enclosing another questionnaire together with a stamped addressed envelope for your reply.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs.) Rosalie Silverstone, B.Sc.(Soc.)

Head of Department, Professor Sir Robert Birley, K.C.M.G., M.A., F.S.A.





# THE CITY UNIVERSITY

ST JOHN STREET · LONDON E.C.1 · 01-253 4399

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE & HUMANITIES

Dear

I would like to introduce Mrs. R. Silverstone, a sociologist in my Department, who is undertaking research into secretaries and their jobs. This is a subject which it is increasingly widely recognised is of the utmost importance when the problems of industrial and business efficiency in this country are considered, but surprisingly little work has been done in this field.

Your name has been selected in a random sample of all business addresses in central London and I am therefore writing to ask your permission for Mrs. Silverstone to hand a questionnaire to any secretaries employed by you. The questionnaire would, of course, be answered by secretaries at home, and not in their employer's time, and then be returned by post in a stamped-addressed envelope.

At the same time it would be most valuable, in order to gain a balanced view of the situation, if Mrs. Silverstone could discuss with you (or an appropriate member of your staff) any views you may have on secretaries.

All the information received will be treated in absolute confidence and the results obtained presented in such a way as to make both the respondents and their employers completely anonymous.

Mrs. Silverstone will telephone you in the near future to ascertain whether you employ any secretaries, if you are willing to allow her to hand them a questionnaire, and whether you would have time to grant her an interview.

Yours faithfully,

Professor Sir Robert Birley  
K.C.M.G., M.A., F.S.A.

Head of Department, Professor Sir Robert Birley, K.C.M.G., M.A., F.S.A.



THE CITY UNIVERSITY

Department of Social Science and Humanities

SECRETARIES AND THEIR JOBS

(Interview with employers)

Name of establishment

Address

Telephone number

Date visited

Name of person giving interview

Position in firm

A. I would like to ask you a few questions about your organisation

1. Is the whole of your organisation situated here?

Yes/No

If No - Is this a

Head Office

Branch

Separate Department

Division

Other

2. Do you know how many office staff, of all kinds, you employ here?

(How many of these would you consider to be executives?)

3. How many secretaries do you employ here?



B. Now I would like to ask you some questions about secretaries.

1. For which people in your organisation do secretaries work?

2. Do you have any kind of a training scheme for secretaries?

3. Do your secretaries have to have any educational qualifications before you employ them?

4. Do your secretaries have to have any specific secretarial qualifications before you employ them? (e.g. speed, s/t test, diploma)

a) Have you heard of the Private Secretary's Diploma? Yes/No

or

b) The Institute of Qualified Private Secretaries Yes/No

or

c) The National Association of Personal Secretaries Yes/No

5. What do you ideally look for in a secretary?

6. What work do you expect your secretaries to do?
7. How important do you think secretaries are to you and to your organisation?
8. Do you think that the secretary's job is a good beginning for women ~~in the business world~~ in the business world?  
if they want to make a career
9. Would you employ a secretary who was married? Yes/No
10. Would you employ a secretary who had any children? Yes/No
11. Do you have any feelings about the age you would prefer your secretary to be?

12. Do you ever employ temporary secretaries? Yes/No

(If yes) For what reasons?

(Are you satisfied with the service you get from agencies?)

13. Do you have any ~~criticisms of~~ secretaries?

(Compared with any other group of employees?)

14. Is there anything in general you would like to say about secretaries?

General comments:



**BLANK IN ORIGINAL**

# APPENDIX 8

## Hours worked by secretaries

Hours:	Length of working day (hours - including lunch)	LONDON (nos. of secretaries)	IQPS (nos. of secretaries)	NAPS (nos. of secretaries)
8.30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.	8	-	1	-
8.30 a.m. - 4.45 p.m.	8 $\frac{1}{4}$	-	4	2
8.30 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	3	19	5
8.30 a.m. - 5.15 p.m.	8 $\frac{3}{4}$	-	5	2
8.30 a.m. - 5.30 p.m.	9	-	2	1
8.45 a.m. - 4.45 p.m.	8	11	2	-
8.45 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.	8 $\frac{1}{4}$	18	13	4
8.45 a.m. - 5.15 p.m.	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	6	9	4
8.45 a.m. - 5.30 p.m.	8 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	6	2
8.45 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.	9 $\frac{1}{4}$	-	-	1
9.00 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	2	-	-
9.00 a.m. - 4.45 p.m.	7 $\frac{3}{4}$	4	1	-
9.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.	8	110	30	13
9.00 a.m. - 5.15 p.m.	8 $\frac{1}{4}$	6	17	3
9.00 a.m. - 5.30 p.m.	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	73	26	17
9.00 a.m. - 5.45 p.m.	8 $\frac{3}{4}$	-	1	-
9.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.	9	-	2	-
9.15 a.m. - 4.45 p.m.	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	-	-	2
9.15 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.	7 $\frac{3}{4}$	2	-	1
9.15 a.m. - 5.15 p.m.	8	21	5	3
9.15 a.m. - 5.30 p.m.	8 $\frac{1}{4}$	8	2	-
9.15 a.m. - 5.45 p.m.	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	2	-	-
9.15 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.	8 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	-	-
9.30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.	7	4	-	-
9.30 a.m. - 4.45 p.m.	7 $\frac{1}{4}$	-	1	-
9.30 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	17	1	-
9.30 a.m. - 5.15 p.m.	7 $\frac{3}{4}$	3	-	-
9.30 a.m. - 5.30 p.m.	8	141	11	7
9.30 a.m. - 5.45 p.m.	8 $\frac{1}{4}$	2	2	-

continued ...

Hours:	Length of working day (hours - including lunch)	LONDON (nos.)	IQPS (nos.)	NAPS (nos.)
9.30 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.	8½	-	2	1
9.45 a.m. - 4.45 p.m.	7	1	-	-
9.45 a.m. - 5.30 p.m.	7¾	2	-	-
9.45 a.m. - 5.45 p.m.	8	1	-	-
10.00 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.	6½	3	-	-
10.00 a.m. - 4.45 p.m.	6¾	1	-	-
10.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.	7	4	-	1
10.00 a.m. - 5.30 p.m.	7½	6	-	-
10.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.	8	31	-	1
Other hours		22	6	3
Not known		9	2	-
		<u>515</u>	<u>170</u>	<u>73</u>



## APPENDIX 9

### Tasks undertaken by secretaries

#### A. General Office Work

1. General office work (so described)
2. Filing, looking for files, making new files
3. Tidying, cleaning
4. Sorting papers, paper work, sorting
5. Tea/coffee making, washing up, serving, use vending machine
6. Checking
7. Sending out or addressing accounts, statements, circulars, forms
8. Switchboard work
9. Stationery, ordering, checking stocks
10. Photocopying, duplicating
11. Cutting stencils, work associated with this
12. Collating
13. Binding
14. Labelling
15. Look after drinks cupboard
16. Errands, internal or external
17. Reception
18. Indexing
19. Packing, boxing, filling containers
20. Prepare offices
21. Answer door

#### B. Letters and correspondence

1. Take shorthand notes
2. Typing
3. Transcribing from notes, or audio
4. Dealing with correspondence

#### C. Post

1. Deal with incoming post
2. Open, distribute letters
3. Deal with outgoing post
4. Post
5. Correspondence, deal with, put files with post

#### D. Communications

1. Telephone
2. Telex, teleprinter, cables
3. See clients, visitors, customers, patients, deal with or talk to
4. Keep people away from boss
5. Liaise with other staff, departments, branches
6. Talk to boss, discussions, listen to
7. Send messages to staff
8. Take people around

#### E. Appointments and Meetings

1. Make appointments
2. Remind boss of appointments, diary, timekeeping
3. Take minutes, table minutes, notes, draft minutes .
4. Attend meetings
5. Organise Board Room, other rooms
6. Arrange meetings, interviews
7. Brief boss for meetings
8. Organisation for meetings, conferences
9. Collect papers for meetings, prepare for
10. Make bookings
11. Committee work
12. Sit on committee

#### F. Travel

1. Travel arrangements, air, train, hotel, etc.
2. Local transport, instruct chauffeur
3. Take people to various places
4. Make itineraries
5. Driving

#### G. Delegated or independent work

##### Paper work

1. Write own letters, memos
2. Make precis of reports, etc., annotate
3. Peruse journals, papers, books, take cuttings
4. Disentangle mistakes, find lost papers
5. Keep records, statistics, charts, graphs, prepare and keep lists, slides
6. Prepare, write, draft reports
7. Editing, proof reading
8. Computer coding, computer work
9. Check documents, others' work
10. Cataloguing
11. Reading letters, papers, documents
12. Writing
13. Get papers ready in advance

##### Research and information

14. Collect information (for reports, papers, etc.)
15. Supply information
16. Calculations
17. Deal with enquiries, queries
18. Research work
19. Analysis

### Staff

20. Interview people
21. Arrange departmental holidays
22. Arrange relief staff, recruit staff
23. Distribute work
24. Give dictation
25. Interview, deal with job applicants
26. Supervise other staff, staff problems, advise on staff
27. Give instructions
28. Negotiate for staff, keep staff happy, staff welfare
29. Train staff
30. Hire and fire
31. Control department, supervise department

### Finance

32. Deal with accounts, documents, forms, bookkeeping, claims
33. Wages, salaries, payments
34. Check income, expenses, tax, bank, insurance, finance, stocks, etc.
35. Ordering, purchasing, buying, selling
36. Telephone sales, orders, negotiations
37. Petty cash

### Organisation

38. Follow-up work, projects, progress
39. Chase up people, papers
40. Organise lunches, dinners, parties, functions
41. Keep track of people, boss
42. Organise appeals, annual events, large conferences
43. Organise students, student activities, student enquiries
44. Keep up work flow in office
45. Organise courses
46. Reorganise systems, planning

### Tasks depending on special nature of employer's work

47. Company secretary work
48. Personnel work
49. Write specifications, make and draw plans
50. Make up layouts, advertising, copy, book space, write advertisements
51. Library work
52. Organise fashion show
53. Arrange public tours of buildings, outings, tours
54. Organise clinic
55. Reorganise stock
56. Conveyancing
57. Court work
58. School meals organisation
59. Invigilate at examinations
60. Broking
61. Accountancy work



## General

62. Maintain knowledge of all aspects of company work
63. Stand in for boss when away
64. Run office, general administration or assistance
65. Deputise for other secretaries, help them out
66. Care for confidential files, papers, information
67. P.a. work, delegated work generally
68. Out of office work, trips, travel

## H. Specialist work

1. Translating
2. Designing
3. Musical work

## I. Social

1. Entertain overseas or other visitors
2. Entertaining, general
3. Social club activities in firm
4. Attend functions
5. Organise social activities
6. Arrange visitors to company flat
7. Attend lunches, business
8. Hostess at conference

## J. Personal tasks for boss

1. Make or buy lunch
2. Buy things, tobacco, etc.
3. Meet children, look after them
4. Sew on buttons, etc., repairs
5. Take dog for a walk
6. Domestic administration
7. Car
8. Personal jobs, work, general
9. Wife's jobs
10. Nurse, mother

## K. Other

1. Reading
2. Flower arranging, decorations
3. Walking from place to place
4. Doing nothing

# APPENDIX 10

## Features of their work which secretaries liked

The detailed list of job features which secretaries liked are given below. All the items described by respondents are included, consequently in some cases features may appear to overlap or be repeated. If a secretary named more than one feature of her job she liked, all the items she mentioned are included and given equal value. In a few cases respondents named more than one item in a single category (for example 'friendly atmosphere' and 'the people I work with', both in category B). Again, both are included in the table.

	LONDON n=515 nos.	IQPS n=170 nos.	NAPS n=73 nos.
<u>A. Boss or bosses</u>			
1. Boss, or bosses, people I work for	68	15	9
2. Boss's cooperation, consideration, kindness, understanding	16	5	2
3. Relationship with boss	8	3	1
4. Boss's appreciation	7	1	-
5. Boss treats me as intelligent, independent	3	2	1
6. Boss teaches me the business	2	-	-
7. Boss methodical	1	-	-
8. When he's in a good mood	1	-	-
9. Boss's enthusiasm	1	1	-
10. Status of boss, head person	1	1	1
11. Easy going	1	-	-
12. Dictates well	1	-	-
13. Keeps me informed	1	-	-
14. Work with, not for, boss	1	-	2
15. Treats me as a person	1	2	-
16. Treats me as an equal	1	-	-
17. Having two bosses	1	-	-
18. Having only one boss	-	1	-
19. Talking and discussions with boss	-	-	1
20. Like and know boss's family	-	-	1
	<hr/> 115 <hr/>	<hr/> 31 <hr/>	<hr/> 18 <hr/>

continued ...

	LONDON (n=515) nos.	IQPS (n=170) nos.	NAPS (n=73) nos.
<u>B. Other people at work, and the atmosphere generated</u>			
1. Friendly atmosphere, happy, congenial, friendly environment	75	11	5
2. People I meet through work	45	20	5
3. People I work with	42	1	2
4. The people	40	8	1
5. Informality, relaxed, easy-going atmosphere	25	3	1
6. Colleagues, companions	16	5	-
7. Everyone works well together, cooperates	7	-	-
8. Intelligent, interesting people to work with	5	2	3
9. Plenty of people around	1	1	-
10. Famous people I meet at work	1	1	-
11. Meet people from all over the world	1	1	-
12. Lively atmosphere	1	1	-
13. Work involves people	-	1	-
14. Young people around	-	1	-
	<u>259</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>C. The firm or organisation for which secretaries worked</u>			
1. Type of work (e.g. medical, university)	17	3	3
2. Small number of staff, small firm or unit	3	1	-
3. Nearness to home	3	-	3
4. Management considerate to staff	3	-	-
5. Good company to work for	1	-	-
6. New firm, young firm	1	2	-
7. Large firm	1	1	-
8. Location or situation of firm	1	-	2
9. Well-organised firm	1	-	1
10. International firm	1	-	-
11. Lively company	-	2	1
	<u>32</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>D. Conditions of work</u>			
1. Conditions of work, general	24	7	1
2. Pay, money	22	5	4
3. Hours	18	2	2
4. Pleasant surroundings	8	2	-
5. Easy travel	4	2	-
6. Own office	3	4	-
7. Holidays	3	1	-
8. Electric typewriter	1	3	-
9. Good equipment	1	-	-
10. Breaks	1	-	-
11. The view	1	-	-
12. The office	-	1	-
13. Financial rewards for effort	-	1	-
14. Accommodation with job	-	1	2
15. No fixed hours	-	1	-
	<u>86</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>9</u>



	LONDON (n=515) nos.	IQPS (n=170) nos.	NAPS (n=73) nos.
<u>E. Intrinsic factors</u>			
<u>i. Interest</u>			
1. Interesting, absorbing work	23	4	6
2. Never bored	4	-	1
3. Never dull	3	-	-
4. Exciting aspects of work	3	7	1
	<hr/> 33	<hr/> 11	<hr/> 8
<u>ii. Variety</u>			
5. Variety, wide range of duties and interests	89	60	19
6. No routine	3	2	1
7. Flexibility of job	3	-	-
8. Never know what will happen next	1	-	2
	<hr/> 96	<hr/> 62	<hr/> 22
<u>iii. Responsibility, initiative, knowledge</u>			
9. Responsibility, trust	31	20	7
10. Can use initiative, knowledge, give advice	27	7	6
11. Stimulating, exercises mind	3	-	2
12. Job grows, develops	2	-	-
13. Have complete knowledge of firm's work	2	2	-
14. Can use skill, scope for using skill	2	3	1
15. Personal assistant work	1	1	-
16. Make own decisions	1	-	-
17. Can try new ideas	1	-	-
18. Jobs I can do myself	1	-	-
19. I am a REAL secretary	-	3	-
	<hr/> 71	<hr/> 36	<hr/> 16
<u>iv. Supervision, pace</u>			
20. Work in own time, freedom to; work at own pace	23	4	6
21. Unsupervised, independent, work on own	11	2	-
22. Keep busy	7	2	1
23. No pettiness, restrictions, discipline	4	-	-
24. Relaxed pace of work	1	-	-
25. Steady routine	1	1	-
	<hr/> 47	<hr/> 9	<hr/> 7

	LONDON (n=515) nos.	IQPS (n=170) nos.	NAPS (n=73) nos.
<u>v. Particular jobs liked</u>			
26. Typing, shorthand	2	1	-
27. Personnel work	3	-	1
28. Telephone work	1	-	-
29. Research work	1	-	-
30. Miscellaneous tasks	4	4	2
31. Personal work for boss	-	1	-
	<u>11</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>vi. Opportunities and learning</u>			
32. Amount to be learned from job	8	-	2
33. Opportunities for travel, business trips	3	8	-
34. Opportunities for future in firm	2	-	-
35. New field of interest	1	-	-
	<u>14</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>vii. Status, seniority</u>			
36. Status, senior secretary, seniority	4	3	2
37. Treated as part of management	-	1	-
	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>viii. Understanding work and satisfaction from it.</u>			
38. Involvement with firm, job, sense of belonging	7	3	2
39. Can understand work, easy work	3	-	-
40. Sense of achievement when job done	2	-	-
41. Can see work through to end	2	1	1
42. Feel I am doing a good job	2	1	1
43. Work helps people, useful service	2	3	3
44. Feel needed, indispensable	1	1	-
45. Help firm run smoothly	-	1	-
46. Like helping boss do a good job	-	1	-
	<u>19</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>7</u>

	LONDON (n=515) nos.	IQPS (n=170) nos.	NAPS (n=73) nos.
F. <u>Other</u>			
1. Security	7	2	2
2. Can forget work at 5.30	1	-	-
3. I am happy	1	-	-
4. Miscellaneous	3	3	1
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	12	5	3
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>



# APPENDIX 11

## Features of work which secretaries disliked (as described)

	LONDON (n=515) nos.	IQPS (n=170) nos.	NAPS (n=73) nos.
<u>A. Boss or bosses</u>			
1. Competitiveness for urgent work	7	-	-
2. Two or more bosses, divided loyalty	4	-	-
3. More than one boss, too many bosses	4	-	-
4. Boss, bosses	4	-	-
5. Boss moody, temperamental, bad moods	3	1	2
6. Thinks I am a machine	2	-	-
7. Boss not interested in staff, poor attitude to staff	2	7	-
8. Boss rude, inconsiderate	2	1	-
9. Future boss	1	-	-
10. Boss very particular	1	-	-
11. Smokes heavily	1	-	-
12. Boss slow	1	-	-
13. Must have his own way	1	-	-
14. Eccentric	-	1	-
15. Takes away work one has initiated	1	-	-
16. Dictates badly	1	1	-
17. Never says where going, bad timekeeper	-	1	1
18. Does not keep me informed	1	1	-
19. Never thanked, taken for granted	1	1	-
	<hr/> 37 <hr/>	<hr/> 14 <hr/>	<hr/> 3 <hr/>
<u>B. Other people at work</u>			
1. Particular person, or people	11	-	2
2. Politics, conflicts, friction	5	-	1
3. Being alone, lonely	4	-	-
4. Meet few people	3	2	-
5. Other girls	2	-	-
6. Present staff poor, uninterested	2	-	-
7. No female company	2	-	-
8. No people of same age	2	-	-
9. The atmosphere	-	1	-
10. Clashes among female staff	-	1	-
11. Interference by colleagues	1	-	1
12. Colleagues who are late	1	-	-
13. Colleagues who are lazy, incompetent	1	4	1
14. Lack of contact with people at the top	1	-	-
15. Ungrateful people	1	-	-
	<hr/> 36 <hr/>	<hr/> 8 <hr/>	<hr/> 5 <hr/>

	LONDON (n=515) nos.	IQPS (n=170) nos.	NAPS (n=73) nos.
<u>C. Firm or organisation for which secretaries worked</u>			
1. Lack of organisation, inefficient, slow decision-making	9	5	3
2. Firm small	2	-	-
3. Not enough staff employed	2	-	2
4. Insecurity, firm moving	1	3	1
5. Bad filing system	1	-	-
6. Growth of firm means less knowledge	1	-	-
7. Type of work done by firm	1	-	-
8. Regimented organisation	1	-	-
9. Too large	1	-	-
10. Commercialism of firm	-	1	-
11. Constant movement of executives	-	1	-
	<hr/> 19 <hr/>	<hr/> 10 <hr/>	<hr/> 6 <hr/>
<u>D. Conditions of work</u>			
<u>i. Office</u>			
1. Office	8 )	-	2
2. Sharing room	5 )	3	1
3. Shortage of space	3 )	-	1
4. Small office	2 ) 19	1	-
5. Noisy office	1 )	-	-
6. Open-plan office	- )	1	-
<u>ii. Hours</u>			
7. Late working	6 )	3	-
8. Hours	5 )	6	-
9. Short lunch hour	2 ) 16	-	-
10. Holiday times	1 )	-	-
11. Limited time off	1 )	-	-
12. Evening work, overtime	1 )	1	-
13. Pay	16	-	1
14. Travelling, journey	16	6	4
15. Working conditions, general	10	5	1
16. Area, no shops	5	3	2
17. Vending machine for beverages	1	-	-
18. Poor heating	1	-	-
19. No electric typewriter	1	-	-
20. Inadequate audio system	-	1	-
21. Poor equipment	-	1	-
22. No social amenities	1	-	-
23. Too quiet	1	-	-
24. Distance from boss	1	-	-
	<hr/> 88 <hr/>	<hr/> 31 <hr/>	<hr/> 12 <hr/>

	LONDON (n=515) nos.	IQPS (n=170) nos.	NAPS (n=73) nos.
<u>E. Intrinsic factors</u>			
<u>i. Lack of interest</u>			
1. Uninteresting work	5	1	-
2. Boring, occasional boredom	4	1	-
3. Subject matter of letters	-	1	-
	<u>9</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>ii. Variety</u>			
4. Routine work, dull patches	34	18	4
5. Too much shorthand or typing	9	2	-
6. Little variety, monotony	3	-	-
7. Routine	-	-	1
8. Too diversified	1	-	-
	<u>47</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>iii. Responsibility, initiative, knowledge</u>			
9. Lack of responsibility, initiative	13	13	3
10. Not used to full capability	5	4	-
11. Not enough delegation, p.a. work	1	2	1
12. Not enough scope in specialist job	-	1	-
13. Less responsible jobs get same pay	1	-	-
14. Too much responsibility	1	1	-
	<u>21</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>iv. Supervision, pace</u>			
15. Inactivity between jobs, not enough work	31	11	3
16. Too much work, pressure	10	3	2
17. Late rush	6	1	-
18. Pettiness, rules, red tape	5	4	1
19. Not enough time to do work	4	2	1
20. Inactive when boss away	3	-	-
21. Rush jobs	3	2	1
22. Too busy to drink tea/coffee	2	-	-
23. Work always wanted immediately	1	-	-
	<u>65</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>8</u>



	LONDON (n=515) nos.	IQPS (n=170) nos.	NAPS (n=73) nos.
<u>v. Particular tasks disliked</u>			
24. Filing	23	9	4
25. Typing, copy-typing, re-typing	18	3	2
26. Tea/coffee making, serving, washing-up	14	2	1
27. Telephone or unpleasant telephone calls	10	2	1
28. General office work	8	2	1
29. Forms, lists	4	1	1
30. Menial work	2	1	-
31. Cover for other secretaries	2	-	-
32. Dictaphone work	2	-	-
33. Miscellaneous jobs	10	2	1
	93	22	11
<u>vi. Opportunities</u>			
34. No prospect of promotion	5	2	3
35. Prejudice against women	-	1	-
36. Women treated as inferior	-	1	-
	5	4	3
<u>vii. Status, seniority</u>			
37. Status	4	-	1
38. Subordinate to inferior men	1	-	-
39. 'Bossed around'	1	-	-
40. Low status of secretaries in firm	1	-	-
	7	-	1
<u>viii. Lack of understanding and dissatisfaction</u>			
41. Don't understand boss's subject	2	3	1
42. Too easy	2	-	-
43. Feel inadequate sometimes	1	-	-
44. Frustration	-	1	-
45. No sense of achievement	-	-	1
	5	4	2
<u>F. Other</u>			
1. Interruptions	3	-	-
2. Unfair distribution of work	2	-	-
3. Crises	1	-	-
4. Too little shorthand	1	-	-
5. Desk-bound	1	-	-
6. Impersonal, anonymity	1	1	-
7. Miscellaneous	7	6	4
	16	7	4

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